

QUENTIN DURWARD

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT

ABRIDGED BY

N. K. SIDHANTA, M.A. (Cantab.),

*Professor of English Literature and Dean of the Faculty of Arts,
Lucknow University*

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INTRODUCTION.

Sir Walter Scott, like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was born in 1771; and he died in 1832, the year of the First Reform Act. Scott wrote poetry at first, but afterwards turned to novel-writing; and he produced his Waverley Novels to the enthusiastic wonder of his Age. They were published anonymously at the outset, so that Scott has been referred to frequently as 'The Great Unknown', but the author's identity was scarceful ever doubtful. His chief works in verse are the long romantic poems: THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL, THE LADY OF THE LAKE, THE LORD OF THE ISLES, and MARMION; but he wrote many short poems as well, and such an excellent critic as Palgrave has included about a dozen of his lyrics in the GOLDEN TREASURY; while of one of them,—PROUD MAISIE,—he has written:—'Scott has given us nothing more complete and lovely than this little song, which unites simplicity and dramatic power to a wild wood music of the rarest quality.' Scott's poetry is pleasant to read, on account of his choice of interesting subjects and his lively treatment; but his fame rests above all on his works in prose, of which probably the best-known are IVANHOE, KENILWORTH, ROB ROY, and QUENTIN DURWARD.

Certain circumstances influenced Scott as a writer. The first of these was his descent. He came of an old and famous Border family. The Borders are those districts which lie on the extreme north of England and the extreme south of Scotland. Before these two countries were united under King James I in 1603, this 'debatable land' was in a state of chronic unrest. The earlier kings of Scotland were inclined to leave unchecked the power of the Scottish Border families, who were a useful bulwark against the aggression of England, and first-class fighting material when an invasion of that country was contemplated. Naturally enough, their chief enemies were the English Border families; but the Scottish borderers were a turbu-

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lent folk, often in revolt against the King's law, and involved perpetually in blood feuds against their closest neighbours. The most famous family of them all was that of Douglas, celebrated in Scottish history and best known, perhaps, from *CHEVY CHASE*, a mediæval ballad commemorating the fight between the Douglases and the Northumbrian Percies at Otterbourne. Amongst the other Border names of Armstrong, Elliot, Jardine, Johnstone, Marshall, Kennedy, etc., that of Scott is eminent; and it is therefore important for our purposes to note that although Sir Walter was actually born in Edinburgh he was descended from the Scotts of Yarrow and Teviotdale, and was, from an early age, steeped in the tales and traditions of the restless Border country, and so developed a taste for the stirring and romantic in history.

By inclination and temperament also Scott was a very keen student of local history, especially if it were of a legendary or romantic nature. He spent much time in reading, collecting, and restoring the old ballads of the Borders, and in jogging the failing memories of its oldest story-telling inhabitants. He loved ardently the natural scenery of the district. Nor was he alone in this respect, as we know that Hogg and Wordsworth, amongst others, have celebrated its charms in verse, and S. R. Crockett and R. L. Stevenson in prose. Of Scott's own works, *THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL*, *MARMION*, *REDGAUNTLET*, and *THE BLACK DWARF* owe their inspiration directly to the Borders, as do many of his shorter pieces, such as *YOUNG LOCHINVAR*, *JOCK O' HAZELDEAN*, etc.

Following in the footsteps of his father, Scott embraced the profession of Law, his studies taking him to Edinburgh, the capital city of Scotland. There he enjoyed wider facilities for research and indulged more fully his antiquarian bent. Moreover, Edinburgh was a city of romance. The ill-starred dynasty of the House of Stuart, closely identified for centuries with Edinburgh's history, may have been unfortunate, but its kings and queens were never ordinary. The Castle and the Palace at Holyrood House provided a story in every room. Many centred in Mary, Queen of Scots, than whom there is no figure more arresting and

appealing in the chronicles of her country, and Scott has given us a full-length picture of her in *THE ABBOT*. Of equal interest was her fascinating descendant, Prince Charlie, the Young Chevalier; and there must have been persons alive in Edinburgh when Scott was a student there who remembered, and perhaps witnessed, the coming of this gallant young Pretender to Holyrood in the year 1745, on his way to the invasion of England and the disastrous attempt to regain the throne of his ancestors. One way and another, the city of Edinburgh must have been full enough of reminiscence and memories to satisfy even Scott's craving for the romance and pageantry of the past.

Like Wordsworth, Scott grew to manhood when the events of the French Revolution were shaking Europe to its foundations; but, unlike him, its political aspect did not attract the youthful Scottish writer. Walter Scott was strongly conservative, a sturdy supporter of and believer in monarchy, uninterested in reforms. From them he turned with relief to a past which became but the more charming as modern conditions and events, such as the happenings in France, the political agitations in England, and the rise of a new class in society—the working-class—were changing the world. Scott seemed to accept wholeheartedly the doctrine which that sane observer of life, William Shakespeare, has taught us in his plays—that established authority must be acknowledged—just as he shared fully the great dramatist's dislike of democracy.

The appeal of the Middle Ages was a many-sided one. Scott loved the pageantry of the past; and he betrays this love in descriptions such as that of the Joust at Ashby in *IVANHOE*, or the revels at Kenilworth. The high figures of historical romance attracted him irresistibly: Richard the Lion-hearted; Mary, Queen of Scots; her powerful rival, Queen Elizabeth; Prince Charlie, the Young Pretender; The Duke of Montrose; the Marquis of Claverhouse; Charles the Bold of Burgundy. He selected as his themes the stirring events of history: the Crusades; the fight at the North Inch of Perth; the escape from Lochleven; the tragedy of Cumnor Hall; the march to Derby; the Porteous Riots. He found a place in his plots for

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traditional, popular, or legendary figures: Robin Hood, Hal o' the Wynd, Wayland Smith, Rob Roy, Sir Walter Raleigh, Edmund Spenser. He gave a mysterious touch to the already mysterious people of the Middle Ages; gipsies, wizards, astrologers, magicians, charlatans. He created contemporary types, and gave them a general fidelity to the age in which they lived: Gurth, Michael Lambourne, Dugald Dalgetty, Baron Bradwardine, Dominie Sampson, the Antiquary. He chose frequently to present his heroes in disguise, as Shakespeare presented so many of his heroines, and for pretty much the same reasons; or he sent them off to win fame and fortune at a foreign court, often as mediæval 'Soldiers of Fortune,' or mercenaries.

Scott the novelist used his material as did Shakespeare the dramatist and Turner the painter, reserving to himself full liberty in its selection and treatment. He allowed his interest in his creations to over-balance sometimes his sense of proportion; and his portraits of such as Dugald Dalgetty and Dominie Sampson, for instance, are filled in with a completeness which their importance in the plot scarcely justifies. In precisely the same way did Shakespeare treat the characters in whom he had become absorbed, for example, Falstaff and Shylock. Moreover, Scott rose superior to the restrictions of exact chronology and was indifferent to petty anachronisms; when he presented a period to his readers he contented himself with embodying its general features. It would appear also that he had to warm to his work; and many of his opening chapters are dull. To put it in a phrase: Scott 'wrote like a gentleman'. He wrote what he pleased. Nor did he concern himself greatly with either brevity or grammar; he is not a model of English style.

His poems and his novels reveal many other aspects of Scott's character and genius: his love of war and adventure, and of the colour of life: his simple pathos: his wide human sympathies. But the greatest thing of all is his wholesome manliness. His pages are unstained by any details which might bring a blush to the cheek of even the most innocent. Immodesty is unknown in Scott. His heroines in particular have a charm and innocence which

recall to us the finest creations of Shakespeare's genius, Cordelia, Imogen, Perdita, Miranda, Viola, and so on. One benefits from reading Scott as one benefits from a holiday by the sea-shore or in the mountaius.

QUENTIN DURWARD was published in 1823. Lockhart, Scott's biographer, tells us that the novel had been conceived in October, 1822, and some progress achieved before the end of that year. 'I have not been very well,' Scott had written to a friend; 'A thickness of blood, and a depression of spirits, arising from the loss of friends, have annoyed me much. I propose a good rally, however, and hope it will be a powerful effect. My idea is, a Scottish archer in the French king's guard, *tempore* Louis XI, the most picturesque of all times.'

'It was, perhaps, some inward misgiving towards the completion of PEVERIL OF THE PEAK, that determined Scott to break new ground in his next novel'; continues Lockhart, 'and, as he had before awakened a fresh interest by venturing on English scenery and history, try the still bolder experiment of a continental excursion. However this may have been, he was encouraged and strengthened by the return of his friend Skene, about this time, from a tour in France; in the course of which he had kept an accurate and lively journal, and executed a vast variety of clever drawings, representing landscapes and ancient buildings, such as would have been most sure to interest Scott had he been the companion of his wanderings. Mr. Skene's MS. collections were placed at his disposal, and he took from one of their chapters the substance of the *original* Introduction to QUENTIN DURWARD. Yet still his difficulties in this new undertaking were frequent, and of a sort to which he had hitherto been a stranger. I remember observing him many times in the Advocate's Library poring over maps and gazetteers with care and anxiety.'

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public, long wearied of the pompous tragedians and feeble romancers, who had alone striven to bring out the ancient history and manners of their country in popular forms, were seized with a fever of delight when Louis XI and Charles the Bold started into life again at the beck of the Northern Magician.'

CHAPTER I.

The Wanderer.

IT was upon a delicious summer morning, before the sun had assumed its scorching power, and while the dews yet cooled and perfumed the air, that a youth, coming from the north-eastward, approached the ford of a small river, or rather a large brook, tributary to the Cher, near to the royal castle of Plessis-les-Tours, whose dark and multiplied battlements rose in the background over the extensive forest with which they were surrounded.

On the bank of the above-mentioned brook, opposite to that which the traveller was approaching, two men, who appeared in deep conversation, seemed, from time to time, to watch his motions; for, as their station was much more elevated, they could remark him at considerable distance.

The age of the young traveller might be about nineteen, or betwixt that and twenty, and his face and person, which were very prepossessing, did not, however, belong to the country in which he was now a sojourner. Although his form had not yet attained its full strength, he was tall and active, and the lightness of the step with which he advanced showed that his pedestrian mode of travelling was pleasure rather than pain to him.

The youth had been long visible to the two persons who loitered on the opposite side of the small river which divided him from the park and the castle; but as he descended the rugged bank to the water's edge, the younger of the two said to the other, 'It is our man—it is the Bohemian! If he attempts to cross the ford, he is a lost man—the water is up, and the ford impassable.'

'Let him make that discovery himself, gossip,' said the elder personage; 'it may, perchance, save a rope, and break a proverb.'

'I judge him by the blue cap,' said the other, 'for I cannot see his face. Hark, sir! He hallooës to know whether the water be deep.'

'Nothing like experience in this world,' answered the other; 'let him try.'

The young man, in the meanwhile, receiving no hint to the contrary, and taking the silence of those to whom he applied as an encouragement to proceed, entered the stream without further hesitation than the delay necessary to take off his buskins. The elder person, at the same moment, hallooed to him to beware, adding, in a lower tone, to his companion, 'Gossip—you have made another mistake—this is not the Bohemian chatterer.'

But the intimation to the youth came too late. He either did not hear or could not profit by it, being already in the deep stream. To one less alert and practised in the exercise of swimming, death had been certain, for the brook was both deep and strong.

'By Saint Anne! but he is a proper youth,' said the elder man. 'Run, gossip, and help your blunder, by giving him aid. He belongs to your own troop—if old saws speak truth, water will not drown him.'

Indeed, the young traveller swam so strongly, and buffeted the waves so well, that, notwithstanding the strength of the current, he was carried but a little way down from the ordinary landing-place.

By this time the younger of the two strangers was hurrying down to the shore to render assistance, while the other followed him at a graver pace, saying to himself as he approached, 'I knew water would never drown that young fellow. See, he is ashore, and grasps his pole! If I make not the more haste, he will beat my gossip for the only charitable action which I ever saw him perform, or attempt to perform, in the whole course of his life.'

There was some reason to augur such a conclusion of the adventure, for the youth had already accosted the Samaritan, who was hastening to his assistance, with these ireful words, 'Discourteous dog! why did you not answer when I called to know if the passage was fit to be attempted? I will teach you the respect due to strangers on the next occasion!'

This was accompanied by a significant flourish with his pole. His opponent, seeing himself thus menaced, laid hand upon his sword, for he was one of those who

on all occasions are more ready for action than for speech ; but his more considerate comrade, who came up, commanded him to forbear, and, turning to the young man, accused him in turn of precipitation in plunging into the swollen ford, and of intemperate violence in quarrelling with a man who was hastening to his assistance.

The young man, on hearing himself thus reproved by a man of advanced age and respectable appearance, lowered his weapon immediately, and said he would be sorry if he had done them injustice ; but, in reality, it appeared to him as if they had suffered him to put his life in peril for want of a word of timely warning, which could be the part neither of honest men nor of good Christians, far less of respectable burgesses, such as they seemed to be.

' Fair son,' said the elder person, ' you seem, from your accent and complexion, a stranger ; and you should recollect your dialect is not so easily comprehended by us, as perhaps it may be uttered by you.'

' Well, father,' answered the youth, ' I do not care much about the ducking I have had, and I shall readily forgive your being partly the cause, provided you will direct me to some place where I can have my clothes dried ; for it is my only suit, and I must keep it somewhat decent.'

' For whom do you take us, fair son ?' said the elder stranger, in answer to this question.

' For substantial burgesses, unquestionably,' said the youth ; ' or, hold—you, master, may be a money-broker, or a corn merchant ; and this man a butcher, or grazier.'

' You have hit our capacities rarely,' said the elder, smiling. ' My business is indeed to trade in as much money as I can ; and my gossip's dealings are somewhat akin to the butcher's. As to your accommodation, we will try to serve you ; but I must first know who you are, and whither you are going ; for, in these times, the roads are filled with travellers on foot and horseback, who have anything in their head but honesty and the fear of God.'

The young stranger answered, after a moment's pause, ' I am ignorant whom I may have the honour to address,' making a slight reverence at the same time, ' but I am indifferent who knows that I am a cadet of Scotland ; and

that I come to seek my fortune in France, or elsewhere, after the custom of my countrymen.'

'And a gallant custom it is,' said the elder stranger. 'You seem a fine young springald, and at the right age to prosper. What say you? I am a merchant, and want a lad to assist in my traffic—I suppose you are too much a gentleman to assist in such mechanical drudgery?'

'Fair sir,' said the youth, 'if your offer be seriously made—of which I have my doubts—I am bound to thank you for it, and I thank you accordingly; but I fear I should be altogether unfit for your service.'

'What!' said the senior, 'I warrant you know better how to draw the bow than how to draw a bill of charges—can handle a broadsword better than a pen—ha!'

'I am, master,' answered the young Scot, 'a braeman, and therefore, as we say, a Bowman. But besides that, I have been in a convent, where the good fathers taught me to read and write, and even to cipher.'

'That is too magnificent,' said the merchant. 'You are a prodigy, man!'

'Rest you merry, fair master,' said the youth, who was not much pleased with his new acquaintance's jocularity, 'I must go dry myself, instead of standing dripping here, answering questions.'

The merchant only laughed louder as he spoke, and answered, 'The proverb never fails—*fier comme un Ecossais*—but come, youngster, you are of a country I have a regard for, having traded in Scotland in my time—an honest poor set of folks they are; and if you will come with us to the village, I shall bestow on you a cup of burnt sack and a warm breakfast, to atone for your drenching. But what do you with a hunting-glove on your hand? Know you not there is no hawking permitted in a royal chase?'

'I was taught that lesson,' answered the youth, 'by a rascally forester of the Duke of Burgundy. I did but fly the falcon I had brought with me from Scotland, and which I reckoned on for bringing me into some note, at a heron near Peronne, and the rascal shot my bird with an arrow.'

'What did you do?' said the merchant.

'Beat him,' said the youngster, brandishing his staff,

'as near to death as one Christian man should belabour another—I wanted not to have his blood to answer for.'

'Know you,' said the burgess, 'that had you fallen into the Duke of Burgundy's hands, he would have hung you up like a chestnut?'

'Ay, I am told he is as prompt as the King of France for that sort of work. But, as this happened near Peronne, I made a leap over the frontiers, and laughed at him. If he had not been so hasty, I might perhaps have taken service with him.'

'He will have a heavy miss of such a paladin as you are, if the truce should break off,' said the merchant, and threw a look at his own companion, who answered him with one of the downcast lowering smiles, which gleamed along his countenance, enlivening it as a passing meteor enlivens a winter sky.

The young Scot suddenly stopped, pulled his bonnet over his right eyebrow, as one who would not be ridiculed, and said firmly, 'My masters, and especially you, sir, the elder, and who should be the wiser, you will find, I presume, no sound or safe jesting at my expense. I do not altogether like the tone of your conversation. I can take a jest with any man, and a rebuke, too, from my elder, and say thank you, sir, if I know it to be deserved; but I do not like being borne in hand as if I were a child, when I find myself man enough to belabour you both, if you provoke me too far.'

The eldest man seemed like to choke with laughter at the lad's demeanour—his companion's hand stole to his sword-hilt, which the youth observing, dealt him a blow across the wrist, which made him incapable of grasping it; while his companion's mirth was only increased by the incident. 'Hold, hold!' he cried, 'most doughty Scot, even for your own dear country's sake; and you, gossip, forbear your menacing look. Let us be just traders, and set off the wetting against the knock on the wrist, which was given with so much grace and alacrity. And hark, my young friend,' he said to the young man with a grave sternness, which, in spite of all the youth could do, damped and overawed him, 'no more violence. I am

no fit object for it, and my gossip, as you may see, has had enough of it. Let me know your name.'

'I can answer a civil question civilly,' said the youth; 'and will pay fitting respect to your age, if you do not urge my patience with mockery. Since I have been here in France and Flanders, men have called me, in their fantasy, the Varlet with the Velvet Pouch, because of this hawk-purse which I carry by my side; but my true name, when at home, is Quentin Durward.'

'Durward!' said the querist; 'is it a gentleman's name?'

'By fifteen descents in our family,' said the young man; 'and that makes me reluctant to follow any other trade than arms.'

'A true Scot! Plenty of blood, plenty of pride, and right great scarcity of ducats, I warrant you. Well, gossip,' he said to his companion, 'go before us, and tell them to have some breakfast ready yonder at the Mulberry-grove; for this youth will do as much honour to it as a starved mouse to a housewife's cheese. And for the Bohemian—hark in your ear—'

His comrade answered by a gloomy, but intelligent smile, and set forward at a round pace, while the elder man continued, addressing young Durward. 'You and I will walk leisurely forward together.'

They soon lost sight of their downward-looking companion, but continued to follow the same path which he had taken, until it led them into a wood of tall trees, mixed with thickets and brushwood, traversed by long avenues, through which were seen, as through a vista, the deer trotting in little herds with a degree of security which argued their consciousness of being completely protected.

'You asked me if I were a good Bowman,' said the young Scot. 'Give me a bow and a brace of shafts, and you shall have a piece of venison in a moment.'

'My young friend,' said his companion, 'take care of that; my gossip yonder has a special eye to the deer; they are under his charge, and he is a strict keeper.'

'He has more the air of a butcher than of a gay forester,' answered Durward. 'I cannot think yon hang-dog look

of his belongs to any one who knows the gentle rules of woodcraft.'

'Ah, my young friend,' answered his companion, 'my gossip has somewhat an ugly favour to look upon at the first; but those who become acquainted with him never are known to complain of him.'

Quentin Durward found something singularly and disagreeably significant in the tone with which this was spoken; and, looking suddenly at the speaker, thought he saw in his countenance, in the slight smile that curled his upper lip, and the accompanying twinkle of his keen dark eye, something to justify his unpleasing surprise. 'I have heard of robbers,' he thought to himself, 'and of wily cheats and cut-throats—what if yonder fellow be a murderer, and this old rascal his decoy-duck? I shall be on my guard—they will get little by me but good Scottish knocks.'

While he was thus reflecting, they proceeded along a path which seemed gradually to ascend. The old man recommended to his companion by no means to quit the track, but, on the contrary, to keep the middle of it as nearly as he could. Durward could not help asking the cause of this precaution.

'You are now near the Court, young man,' answered his guide; 'and there is some difference betwixt walking in this region and on your own heathy hills. Every yard of this ground, excepting the path which we now occupy, is rendered dangerous, and well nigh impracticable, by snares and traps, armed with scythe-blades, which shred off the unwary passenger's limb as sheerly as a hedge-bill lops a hawthorn-sprig—and caltrops which would pierce your foot through, and pitfalls deep enough to bury you in them for ever; for you are now within the precincts of the royal demesne, and we shall presently see the front of the Château.'

'Were I the King of France,' said the young man, 'I would not take so much trouble with traps and gins, but would try instead to govern so well, that no man should dare to come near my dwelling with a bad intent; and for those who came there in peace and goodwill, why, the more of them the merrier we should be.'

His companion looked round affecting an alarmed gaze, and said, 'Hush, hush, Sir Varlet with the Velvet Pouch ! for I forgot to tell you that one great danger of these precincts is, that the very leaves of the trees are like so many ears, which carry all that is spoken to the King's own cabinet.'

'I care little for that,' answered Quentin Durward ; 'I bear a Scottish tongue in my head, bold enough to speak my mind to King Louis's face, God bless him ; and, for the ears you talk of, if I could see them growing on a human head, I would crop them out of it with my wood-knife.'

CHAPTER II.

The Castle.

WHILE Durward and his new acquaintance thus spoke, they came in sight of the whole front of the Castle of Plessis-les-Tours, which, even in those dangerous times, when the great found themselves obliged to reside within places of fortified strength, was distinguished for the extreme and jealous care with which it was watched and defended.

His companion told him that the environs of the Castle, except the single winding path by which the portal might be safely approached, were, like the thickets through which they had passed, surrounded with every species of hidden pitfall, snare, and gin, to entrap the wretch who should venture thither without a guide ; that upon the walls were constructed certain cradles of iron, called *swallows' nests*, from which the sentinels, who were regularly posted there, could, without being exposed to any risk, take deliberate aim at any who should attempt to enter without the proper signal or pass-word of the day ; and that the Archers of the Royal Guard performed that duty day and night, for which they received high pay, rich clothing, and much honour and profit at the hands of King Louis. 'And now tell me, young man,' he continued, 'did you ever see so strong a fortress, and do you think there are men bold enough to storm it ?'

The young man looked long and fixedly on the place,

the sight of which interested him so much that he had forgotten, in the eagerness of youthful curiosity, the wetness of his dress. His eye glanced, and his colour mounted to his cheek like that of a daring man who meditates an honourable action, as he replied, 'It is a strong castle, and strongly guarded; but there is no impossibility to brave men.'

'Are there any in your country who could do such a feat?' said the elder, rather scornfully.

'I will not affirm that,' answered the youth; 'but there are thousands who, in a good cause, would attempt as bold a deed.'

'Umph!' said the senior, 'perhaps you are yourself such a gallant?'

'I should sin if I were to boast where there is no danger,' answered young Durward; 'but my father has done as bold an act.'

'Well,' said his companion, smiling, 'you might meet your match, and your kindred also in the attempt; for the Scottish Archers of King Louis's Life-guards stand sentinels on yonder walls—three hundred gentlemen of the best blood in your country.'

'And were I King Louis,' said the youth, in reply, 'I would trust my safety to the faith of the three hundred Scottish gentlemen, throw down my walls to fill up the moat, call in my noble peers and live as became me, amid breaking of lances in gallant tournaments, and feasting of days with nobles, and dancing of nights with ladies, and have no more fear of a foe than I have of a fly.'

His companion again smiled, and turning his back on the Castle, which, he observed, they had approached a little too nearly, he led the way again into the wood, by a more broad and beaten path than they had yet trodden. 'This,' he said, 'leads us to the village of Plessis, as it is called, where you, as a stranger, will find reasonable and honest accommodation. About two miles onward lies the fine city of Tours, which gives its name to this rich and beautiful earldom. But the village of Plessis, or Plessis of the Park, as it is sometimes called, from its vicinity to the royal residence, and the chase with which it is encircled, will yield you nearer, and as convenient hospitality.'

'I thank you, kind master, for your information,' said the Scot; 'but my stay will be so short here that, if I fail not in a morsel of meat, and a drink of something better than water, my necessities in Plessis, be it of the park or the pool, will be amply satisfied.'

'Nay,' answered his companion, 'I thought you had some friend to see in this quarter.'

'And so I have—my mother's own brother,' answered Durward.

'What is his name?' said the senior; 'we shall inquire him out for you; for it is not safe for you to go up to the Castle, where you might be taken for a spy.'

'Now, by my father's hand!' said the youth, 'I—taken for a spy! By Heaven, he will brook cold iron who brands me with such a charge! But for my uncle's name, I care not who knows it—it is Lesly. Lesly—an honest and noble name.'

'And so it is, I doubt not,' said the old man; 'but there are three of the name in the Scottish Guard.'

'My uncle's name is Ludovic Lesly,' said the young man.

'Of the three Leslys,' answered the merchant, 'two are called Ludovic.'

'They call my kinsman Ludovic with the Scar,' said Quentin. 'Our family names are so common in a Scottish house that, where there is no land in the case, we always give a *to-name*.'

'A *nom de guerre*, I suppose you to mean,' answered his companion; 'and the man you speak of, we, I think, call *Le Balafré*, from that scar on his face—a proper man, and a good soldier. I wish I may be able to help you to an interview with him, for he belongs to a set of gentlemen whose duty is strict, and who do not often come out of garrison, unless in the immediate attendance on the King's person. And now, young man, answer me one question. I will wager you are desirous to take service with your uncle in the Scottish Guard. It is a great thing, if you propose so; especially as you are very young, and some years' experience is necessary for the high office which you aim at.'

'Perhaps I may have thought on some such thing,' said Durward carelessly; 'but if I did, the fancy is off.'

'How so, young man?' said the Frenchman, somewhat sternly. 'Do you speak thus of a charge which the most noble of your countrymen feel themselves emulous to be admitted to?'

'I wish them joy of it,' said Quentin composedly. 'To speak plain, I should have liked the service of the French King full well; only, dress me as fine, and feed me as high as you will, I love the open air better than being shut up in a cage or a swallow's nest yonder, as you call these same grated pepper-boxes. Besides,' he added, in a lower voice, 'to speak truth, I love not the Castle when the trees bear such acorns as I see yonder.'

'I guess what you mean,' said the Frenchman; 'but speak yet more plainly.'

'To speak more plainly, then,' said the youth, 'there grows a fair oak some flight-shot or so from yonder Castle—and on that oak hangs a man in a gray jerkin, such as this which I wear.'

'Ay!' said the man of France—'see what it is to have youthful eyes! Why, I did see something, but only took it for a raven among the banches. But the sight is no way strange, young man; when the summer fades into autumn, and moonlight nights are long, and roads become unsafe, you will see a cluster of ten, ay of twenty such acorns, hanging on that old doddered oak. But what then?—they are so many banners displayed to scare knaves; and for each rogue that hangs there, an honest man may reckon that there is a thief, a traitor, a robber on the highway, an oppressor of the people, the fewer in France. These, young man, are signs of our Sovereign's justice.'

'I would have hung them farther from my palace, though, were I King Louis,' said the youth. 'In my country, we hang up dead corbies where living corbies haunt, but not in our gardens or pigeon-houses. The very scent of the carrion—faugh!—reached my nostrils at the distance where we stood.'

'If you live to be an honest and loyal servant of your Prince, my good youth,' answered the Frenchman, 'you

will know there is no perfume to match the scent of a dead traitor.'

'I shall never wish to live till I lose the scent of my nostrils or the sight of my eyes,' said the Scot. 'Show me a living traitor, and here are my hand and my weapon; but when life is out, hatred should not live longer. But here, I fancy, we come upon a village; where I hope to show you that neither ducking nor disgust has spoiled my appetite for my breakfast. So, my good friend, to the hostelry, with all the speed you may. Yet, ere I accept of your hospitality, let me know by what name to call you.'

'Men call me Maitre Pierre,' answered his companion. 'I deal in no titles. A plain man, who can live on my own good—that is my designation.'

'So be it, Maitre Pierre,' said Quentin, 'and I am happy my good chance has thrown us together; for I want a word of seasonable advice, and can be thankful for it.'

While they spoke thus, the tower of the church, and a tall wooden crucifix, rising above the trees, showed that they were at the entrance of the village.

But Maitre Pierre, deflecting a little from the road, which had now joined an open and public causeway, said to his companion that the inn to which he intended to introduce him stood somewhat secluded, and received only the better sort of travellers.

'If you mean those who travel with the better-filled purses,' answered the Scot, 'I am none of the number, and shall rather stand my chance of your flayers on the highway than of your flayers in the hostelry!'

'How cautious your countrymen of Scotland are!' said his guide, 'An Englishman, now, throws himself headlong into a tavern, eats and drinks of the best, and never thinks of the reckoning till his belly is full. But you forget, Master Quentin, since Quentin is your name, you forget I owe you a breakfast for the wetting which my mistake procured you. It is the penance of my offence towards you.'

'In truth,' said the light-hearted young man, 'I had forgotten wetting, offence, and penance and all. I have walked my clothes dry, or nearly so, but I shall not refuse

your offer in kindness; for my dinner yesterday was a light one, and supper I had none. You seem an old and respectable burgess, and I see no reason why I should not accept your courtesy.'

The Frenchman smiled aside, for he saw plainly that the youth, while he was probably half famished, had yet some difficulty to reconcile himself to the thoughts of feeding at a stranger's cost, and was endeavouring to subdue his inward pride by the reflection that, in such slight obligations, the acceptor performed as complaisant a part as he by whom the courtesy was offered.

In the meanwhile, they descended a narrow lane, overshadowed by tall elms, at the bottom of which a gateway admitted them into the courtyard of an inn of unusual magnitude, calculated for the accommodation of the nobles and suitors who had business at the neighbouring Castle. A scutcheon, bearing the *fleur-de-lys*, hung over the principal door of the large irregular building; but there was about the yard little or none of the bustle which in those days, when attendants were maintained both in public and in private houses, marked that business was alive, and custom plenty. It seemed as if the stern and unsocial character of the royal mansion in the neighbourhood had communicated a portion of its solemn and terrific gloom even to a place designed, according to universal custom elsewhere, for the temple of social indulgence, merry society, and good cheer.

Maitre Pierre, without calling any one, and even without approaching the principal entrance, lifted the latch of a side door, and led the way into a large room, where a faggot was blazing on the hearth, and arrangements made for a substantial breakfast.

'My gossip has been careful,' said the Frenchman to the Scot. 'You must be cold, and I have commanded a fire; you must be hungry, and you shall have breakfast presently.'

He whistled, and the landlord entered, answered Maitre Pierre's greeting with a reverence, but in no respect showed any part of the prating humour properly belonging to a French publican of all ages.

'I expected a gentleman,' said Maitre Pierre, 'to order breakfast—has he done so?'

In answer, the landlord only bowed; and while he continued to bring, and arrange upon the table, the various articles of a comfortable meal, omitted to extol their merits by a single word. And yet the breakfast merited such eulogiums as French hosts are wont to confer upon their regales, as the reader will be informed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

The Breakfast.

We left our young stranger in France situated more comfortably than he had found himself since entering the territories of the ancient Gauls. The breakfast, as we hinted in the conclusion of the last chapter, was admirable. He threw himself upon the ragout, and the plate was presently vacant; he attacked the mighty pasty, marched deep into the bowels of the land, and, seasoning his enormous meal with an occasional cup of wine, returned to the charge again and again, to the astonishment of the host, and the amusement of Maitre Pierre.

Quentin Durward, while thus agreeably employed, could do no otherwise than discover that the countenance of his entertainer, which he had at first found so unprepossessing, mended when it was seen under the influence of the *Vin de Beaulne*, and there was kindness in the tone with which he reproached Maitre Pierre that he amused himself with laughing at his appetite, without eating anything himself.

'I am doing penance,' said Maitre Pierre, 'and may not eat anything before noon, save some comfiture and a cup of water. Bid yonder lady,' he added, turning to the innkeeper, 'bring them hither to me.'

The innkeeper left the room, and Maitre Pierre proceeded: 'Well, have I kept faith with you concerning the breakfast I promised you?'

'The best meal I have eaten,' said the youth, 'since I left Glen-houlakin.'

'Glen—what?' demanded Maitre Pierre; 'are you going to raise the devil, that you use such long-tailed words?'

'Glen-houlakin,' answered Quentin good-humouredly, 'which is to say the Glen of the Midges, is the name of our ancient patrimony, my good sir. You have bought the right to laugh at the sound, if you please.'

'I have not the least intention to offend,' said the old man; 'but I was about to say, since you like your present meal so well, that the Scottish Archers of the guard eat as good a one, or a better, every day.'

'No wonder,' said Durward, 'for if they be shut up in the *swallows' nests* all night, they must needs have a curious appetite in the morning.'

'And plenty to gratify it upon,' said Maitre Pierre. 'They dress like counts, and feast like abbots.'

'It is well for them,' said Durward.

'And wherefore will you not take service here, young man? Your uncle might, I dare say, have you placed on the file when there should a vacancy occur. And, hark in your ear, I myself have some little interest, and might be of some use to you. You can ride, I presume, as well as draw the bow?'

'Our race are as good horsemen as ever put a plated shoe into a steel stirrup; and I know not but I might accept of your kind offer. Yet, look you, food and raiment are needful things, but, in my case, men think of honour, and advancement, and brave deeds of arms. Your King Louis—God bless him, for he is a friend and ally of Scotland—but he lies here in this castle, or only rides about from one fortified town to another; and gains cities and provinces by politic embassies, and not in fair fighting. Now, for me, I am of the Douglases' mind, who always kept the field, because they loved better to hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak.'

'Young man,' said Maitre Pierre, 'do not judge too rashly of the actions of sovereigns. Louis seeks to spare the blood of his subjects, and cares not for his own. He showed himself a man of courage at Montl'héry.'

'Ay, but that was some dozen years ago or more,' answered the youth. 'I should like to follow a master

who would keep his honour as bright as his shield, and always venture foremost in the very throng of the battle.'

'Why did you not tarry at Brussels, then with the Duke of Burgundy? He would put you in the way to have your bones broken every day; and, rather than fail, would do the job for you himself—especially if he heard that you had beaten his forester.'

'Very true,' said Quentin; 'my unhappy chance has shut that door against me.'

'Nay, there are plenty of dare-devils abroad, with whom mad youngsters may find service,' said his adviser. 'What think you, for example, of William de la Marck?'

'What!' exclaimed Durward, 'serve Him with the Beard—serve the Wild Boar of Ardennes—a captain of pillagers and murderers. It would be a blot on my father's scutcheon for ever.'

'At this rate,' said Maitre Pierre, 'as you weigh the characters of each prince and leader, I think you had better become a captain yourself; for where will one so wise find a chieftain fit to command him?'

'You laugh at me, Maitre Pierre,' said the youth good-humouredly, 'and perhaps you are right; but you have not named a man who is a gallant leader, and keeps a brave party up here, under whom a man might seek service well enough.'

'I cannot guess whom you mean,' said Maitre Pierre thoughtfully.

'Why, whom should I mean but the noble Louis de Luxembourg, Count of Saint Paul, the High Constable of France? Yonder he makes his place good, with his gallant little army, holding his head as high as either King Louis or Duke Charles, and balancing between them, like the boy who stands on the midst of a plank, while two others are swinging on the opposite ends.'

'He is in danger of the worst fall of the three,' said Maitre Pierre. 'And hark ye, my young friend, you who hold pillaging such a crime, do you know that your politic Count of Saint Paul was the first to set the example of burning the country during the time of war? and that before the shameful devastation which he committed, open

towns and villages, which made no resistance, were spared on all sides ?'

' Nay, faith,' said Durward, ' if that be the case, I shall begin to think no one of these great men is much better than another. But this Count of Saint Paul, this Constable, has possessed himself of the town which takes its name from my honoured saint and patron, Saint Quentin' (here he crossed himself), ' and I think, were I dwelling there, my holy patron would keep some look-out for me—he has not so many named after him as your more popular saints—and yet he must have forgotten me, poor Quentin Durward, his spiritual god-son, since he lets me go one day without food, and leaves me the next morning to the harbourage of Saint Julian, and the chance courtesy of a stranger, purchased by a ducking in the renowned river Cher, or one of its tributaries.'

' Blaspheme not the saints, my young friend,' said Maitre Pierre. ' Saint Julian is the faithful patron of travellers; and, perhaps, the blessed Saint Quentin has done more and better for you than you are aware of.'

As he spoke, the door opened, and a girl, rather above than under fifteen years old, entered with a platter, covered with damask, on which were placed a small saucer of the dried plums which have always added to the reputation of Tours, and a cup of the curiously chased plate which the goldsmith of that city were anciently famous for executing with a delicacy of workmanship that distinguished them from the other cities of France, and even excelled the skill of the metropolis. The form of the goblet was so elegant that Durward thought not of observing closely whether the material was of silver, or, like what had been placed before himself, of a baser metal, but so well burnished as to resemble the richer ore.

But the sight of the young person by whom this service was executed attracted Durward's attention far more than the petty minutiae of the duty which she performed.

' How now, Jacqueline ! ' said Maitre Pierre, when she entered the apartment. ' Did I not desire that Dame Perette should bring what I wanted ? Is she, or does she think herself, too good to serve me ? '

'My kinswoman is ill at ease,' answered Jacqueline, in a hurried yet a humble tone; 'ill at ease, and keeps her chamber.'

'I am none of those upon whom feigned disorders pass for apologies,' replied Maitre Pierre, with some emphasis.

Jacqueline turned pale at the answer of Maitre Pierre; for it must be owned that his voice and looks, at all times harsh, caustic, and unpleasing, had, when he expressed anger or suspicion, an effect both sinister and alarming.

The mountain chivalry of Quentin Durward was instantly awakened, and he hastened to approach Jacqueline, and relieve her of the burden she bore, and which she passively resigned to him, while, with a timid and anxious look, she watched the countenance of the angry burgess. It was not in nature to resist the piercing and pity-craving expression of her looks, and Maitre Pierre proceeded, not merely with an air of diminished displeasure, but with as much gentleness as he could assume in countenance and manner, 'I blame not you, Jacqueline, and you are too young to be—what it is pity to think you must be one day—a false and treacherous thing, like the rest of your giddy sex. No man ever lived to man's estate but he had the opportunity to know you all. Here is a Scottish cavalier will tell you the same.'

Jacqueline looked for an instant on the young stranger, as if to obey Maitre Pierre, but the glance, momentary as it was, appeared to Durward a pathetic appeal to him for support and sympathy; and with the promptitude dictated by the feelings of youth, he answered hastily, 'That he would throw down his gage to any antagonist who should presume to say such a countenance as that which he now looked upon could be animated by other than the purest and the truest mind.'

The young woman grew deadly pale, and cast an apprehensive glance upon Maitre Pierre, in whom the bravado of the young gallant seemed only to excite laughter, more scornful than applausive. Quentin, whose second thoughts generally corrected the first, though sometimes after they had found utterance, blushed deeply at having uttered what might be construed into an empty boast, in presence of an old man of a peaceful profession; and, as a sort of

just and appropriate penance, resolved patiently to submit to the ridicule which he had incurred. He offered the cup and trencher to Maitre Pierre with a blush on his cheek, and a humiliation of countenance, which endeavoured to disguise itself under an embarrassed smile.

' You are a foolish young man,' said Maitre Pierre, ' and know as little of women as of princes, whose hearts,' he said, crossing himself devoutly, ' God keeps in His right hand. This young man will serve me, Jacqueline; you may withdraw. I shall tell your negligent kinswoman she does ill to expose you to be gazed on unnecessarily.'

' It was only to wait on you,' said the maiden. ' I trust you will not be displeased with my kinswoman, since—'

' Do you bandy words with me, said the merchant, interrupting her, but not harshly, ' or stay you to gaze upon the youngster here? Begone! he is noble, and his services will suffice me.'

Jacqueline vanished ; and so much was Quentin Durward interested in her sudden disappearance that it broke his previous thread of reflection, and he complied mechanically when Maitre Pierre said, in the tone of one accustomed to be obeyed, as he threw himself carelessly upon a large easy-chair, ' Place that tray beside me.'

The merchant then let his dark eyebrows sink over his keen eyes, so that the last became scarcely visible, or but shot forth occasionally a quick and vivid ray, like those of the sun setting behind a dark cloud, through which its beams are occasionally darted, but singly, and for an instant.

' That is a beautiful creature,' said the old man at last, raising his head, and looking steadily and firmly at Quentin, when he put the question—' a lovely girl to be the servant of an inn?—she might grace the board of an honest citizen ; but 'tis a vile education, a base origin.'

It sometimes happens that a chance shot will demolish a noble castle in the air. Quentin was disconcerted, and was disposed to be angry—he himself knew not why—with this old man, for acquainting him that this beautiful creature was neither more nor less than what her occupation announced—the servant of the inn—an upper servant, indeed, and probably a niece of the landlord, or such like;

but still a domestic, and obliged to comply with the humour of the customers, and particularly of Maitre Pierre, who probably had sufficiency of whims, and was rich enough to ensure their being attended to.

The thought, the lingering thought, again returned on him, that he ought to make the old gentleman understand the difference betwixt their conditions, and call on him to mark that, however rich he might be, his wealth put him on no level with a Durward of Glen-houlakin. Yet, whenever he looked on Maitre Pierre's countenance with such a purpose, there was, notwithstanding the downcast look, pinched features, and mean and miserly dress, something which prevented the young man from asserting the superiority over the merchant which he conceived himself to possess. (On the contrary, the oftener and more fixedly Quentin looked at him, the stronger became his curiosity to know who or what this man actually was; and he set him down internally for at least a high magistrate of Tours, or one who was, in some way or other, in the full habit of exacting and receiving deference.

Meantime, the merchant seemed again sunk into a reverie, from which he raised himself only to make the sign of the cross devoutly, and to eat some of the dried fruit, with a morsel of biscuit. He then signed to Quentin to give him the cup, adding, however, by way of question, as he presented it, 'You are noble, you say?'

'I surely am,' replied the Scot, 'if fifteen descents can make me so—so I told you before. But do not constrain yourself on that account, Maitre Pierre; I have always been taught it is the duty of the young to assist the more aged.'

'An excellent maxim,' said the merchant, availing himself of the youth's assistance in handing the cup, and filling it from a ewer which seemed of the same materials as the goblet.

'The devil take the ease and familiarity of this old mechanical burgher,' said Durward once more to himself; 'he uses the attendance of a noble Scottish gentleman with as little ceremony as I would that of a gillie from Glen Isla.'

The merchant, in the meanwhile, having finished his

cup of water, said to his companion, 'From the zeal with which you seemed to relish the *Vin de Beaulne*, I fancy you would not care much to pledge me in this elemental liquor. But I have an elixir about me which can convert even the rock water into the richest wines of France.'

As he spoke, he took a large purse from his bosom, and streamed a shower of small silver pieces into the goblet, until the cup was more than half full.

'You have reason to be more thankful, young man,' said Maitre Pierre, 'both to your patron Saint Quentin, and to Saint Julian, than you seemed to be but now. I would advise you to bestow alms in their name. Remain in this hostelry until you see your kinsman, Le Balafré, who will be relieved from guard in the afternoon. I shall cause him to be acquainted that he may find you here, for I have business in the Castle.'

Quentin Durward would have said something to have excused himself from accepting the profuse liberality of his new friend; but Maitre Pierre, bending his dark brows, and erecting his stooping figure into an attitude of more dignity than he had yet seen him assume, said, in a tone of authority, 'No reply, young man, but do what you are commanded.'

With these words, he left the apartment, making a sign, as he departed, that Quentin must not follow him.

The young Scotsman stood astounded, and knew not what to think of the matter. His first most natural impulse drove him to peep into the silver goblet, which assuredly was more than half full of silver pieces, to the number of several scores, of which perhaps Quentin had never called twenty his own at one time during the course of his whole life. But could he reconcile it to his dignity as a gentleman to accept the money of this wealthy plebeian? He perhaps took the wisest resolution in the circumstances, in resolving to be guided by the advice of his uncle; and, in the meantime, he put the money into his velvet hawking-pouch, and called for the landlord of the house, in order to restore the silver cup—resolving, at the same time, to ask him some questions about this liberal and authoritative merchant.

The man of the house appeared presently ; and, if not more communicative, was at least more loquacious than he had been formerly. He declined positively to take back the silver cup. It was none of his, he said, but Maitre Pierre's, who had bestowed it on his guest.

'And, pray, who is this Maitre Pierre,' said Durward, interrupting him, 'who confers such valuable gifts on strangers ?'

'Who is Maitre Pierre?' said the host, dropping the words as slowly from his mouth as if he had been distilling them.

'Ay,' said Durward, hastily and peremptorily, 'who is this Maitre Pierre, and why does he throw about his bounties in this fashion? And who is the butcherly-looking fellow whom he sent forward to order breakfast?'

'Why, fair sir, as to who Maitre Pierre is, you should have asked the question of himself; and for the gentleman who ordered breakfast to be made ready, may God keep us from his closer acquaintance!'

'There is something mysterious in all this,' said the young Scot. 'This Maitre Pierre tells me he is a merchant.'

'And if he told you so,' said the innkeeper, 'surely he is a merchant.'

'What commodities does he deal in?'

'Oh, many a fair matter of traffic,' said the host ; 'and especially he has set up silk manufactories here, which match those rich bales that the Venetians bring from India and Cathay.'

'And that young person who brought in the confections, who is she, my good friend?' said the guest.

'My lodger, sir, with her guardian, some sort of aunt or kinswoman, as I think,' replied the innkeeper.

'And do you usually employ your guests in waiting on each other?' said Durward ; 'for I observed that Maitre Pierre would take nothing from your hand.'

'Rich men may have their fancies, for they can pay for them,' said the landlord ; 'this is not the first time that Maitre Pierre has found the true way to make gentlefolks serve at his beck.'

The young Scotsman felt somewhat offended at the insinuation ; but, disguising his resentment, he asked

whether he could be accommodated with an apartment at this place for a day, and perhaps longer.

'Certainly,' the innkeeper replied; 'for whatever time he was pleased to command it.'

'Could he be permitted,' he asked, 'to pay his respects to the ladies, whose fellow-lodger he was about to become?'

The innkeeper was uncertain. 'They went not abroad,' he said, 'and received no one at home.'

'With the exception, I presume, of Maitre Pierre?' said Durward.

'I am not at liberty to name any exceptions,' answered the man, firmly but respectfully.

Quentin, who carried the notions of his own importance pretty high, considering how destitute he was of means to support them, being somewhat mortified by the innkeeper's reply, did not hesitate to avail himself of a practice common enough in that age 'Carry to the ladies,' he said, 'a flask of *vernat*, with my humble duty; and say that Quentin Durward, of the house of Glen-houlakin, a Scottish cavalier of honour, and now their fellow-lodger, desires the permission to dedicate his homage to them in a personal interview.'

The messenger departed, and returned, almost instantly, with the thanks of the ladies, who declined the proffered refreshment, and with their acknowledgments to the Scottish cavalier, regretted that, residing there in privacy, they could not receive his visit.

Quentin bit his lip, and took a cup of the rejected *vernat*, which the host had placed on the table. 'This is a strange country,' said he to himself, 'where merchants and mechanics exercise the manners and munificence of nobles, and little travelling damsels, who hold their court in an inn, keep their state like disguised princesses! I will see that black-browed maiden again, or it will go hard, however;' and, having formed this prudent solution, he demanded to be conducted to the apartment which he was to call his own.

The landlord presently ushered him up a turret staircase, and from thence along a gallery, with many doors opening from it. The host paused at the end of the gallery, selected a key from the large bunch which he carried

at his girdle, opened the door, and showed his guest the interior of a turret-chamber, small, indeed, but which, being clean and solitary, and having the pallet bed, and the few articles of furniture, in unusually good order, seemed, on the whole a little palace.

Whilst Quentin was engaged there a sort of attendant or chamberlain of the inn informed him that a cavalier desired to speak with him below.

CHAPTER IV.

The Man-at-Arms.

THE cavalier who awaited Quentin Durward's descent into the apartment where he had breakfasted was one of those of whom Louis XI had long since said, that they held in their hands the fortune of France, as to them were entrusted the direct custody and protection of the royal person.

Ludovic Lesly, or, as we shall more frequently call him Le Balafré, by which name he was generally known in France, was upwards of six feet high, robust, strongly compacted in person, and hard-favoured in countenance, which latter attribute was much increased by a large and ghastly scar.

His dress and arms were splendid. Quentin Durward, though, like the Scottish youth of the period, he had been early taught to look upon arms and war, thought he had never seen a more martial-looking or more completely equipped and accomplished man-at-arms than now saluted him in the person of his mother's brother, called Ludovic with the scar or Le Balafré; yet he could not but shrink a little from the grim expression of his countenance, while, with its rough moustaches, he brushed first the one and then the other cheek of his kinsman, welcomed his nephew to France, and, in the same breath, asked what news from Scotland.

'Little good tidings, dear uncle,' replied young Durward. 'But sit you down—sit you down,' said Le Balafré, 'if there is sorrow to hear of, we will have wine to make us bear it. Ho! old Pinch-Measure, our good host, bring us of thy best.'

The well-known sound of the Scottish-French was familiar in the taverns near Plessis, and promptly—ay, with the promptitude of fear and precipitation, was it heard and obeyed. A flagon of champagne stood before them, of which the elder took a draught, while the nephew helped himself only to a moderate sip, to acknowledge his uncle's courtesy, saying, in excuse, that he had already drunk wine that morning.

'That had been a rare good apology in the mouth of your sister, fair nephew,' said Le Balafré; 'you must fear the winepot less if you would write yourself soldier. But come—come—unbuckle your Scottish mail-bag—give us the news of Glen-houlakin. How is my sister ?'

'Dead, fair uncle,' answered Quentin sorrowfully.

'Dead !' echoed his uncle, with a tone rather marked by wonder than sympathy—'why, she was five years younger than I, and I was never better in my life. Dead ! the thing is impossible. I have never had so much as a headache, unless after revelling with the brethren of the joyous science—and my poor sister is dead ! And your father, fair nephew ?'

'Alas ! dear uncle, my mother was left a widow a year since, when Glen-houlakin was harried by the Ogilvies. My father, and my two uncles, and my two elder brothers, and seven of my kinsmen, and some six more of our people, were killed in defending the castle ; and there is not a burning hearth or a standing stone in all Glen-houlakin.'

'Cross of Saint Andrew !' said Le Balafré; 'that is what I call an onslaught ! Ay, these Ogilvies were ever but sorry neighbours to Glen-houlakin—an evil chance it was ; but fate of war—fate of war. When did this mishap befall, fair nephew ?' With that he took a deep draught of wine, and shook his head with much solemnity, when his kinsman replied that his family had been destroyed upon the festival of St. Jude last.

'Look you there,' said the soldier; 'I said it was all chance—on that very day I and twenty of my comrades carried the Castle of Roche-noir by storm, from Amaury Bras-de-fer, a captain of free lances, whom you must have heard of. I killed him on his own threshold, and gained

as much gold as made this fair chain, which was once twice as long as it now is; and that reminds me to send part of it on an holy errand. Here, Andrew—Andrew !'

Andrew, his yeoman, entered, dressed like the Archer himself in the general equipment, but without the armour for the limbs. Untwining his gold chain from his neck, Balafré twisted off about four inches from the one end of it, and said to his attendant, 'Here, Andrew, carry this to my gossip, jolly Father Boniface, the monk of Saint Martin's. Tell my gossip that my brother and sister, and some others of my house, are all dead and gone, and I pray him to say masses for their souls.'

The coutelier nodded.

'Then look that none of the links find their way to the wine-house ere the monk touches them; for if it so chance, you shall taste of saddle-girth and stirrup-leather, till you are as raw as Saint Bartholomew. Yet hold, I see your eye has fixed on the wine measure, and you shall not go without tasting.'

So saying, he filled him a brimful cup, which the coutelier drank off, and retired to do his patron's commission.

'And now, fair nephew, let us hear what was your own fortune in this unhappy matter.'

'I fought it out among those who were older and stouter than I was, till we were all brought down,' said Durward, 'and I received a cruel wound.'

'Not a worse slash than I received ten years since myself,' said Le Balafré. 'Look at this now, my fair nephew,' tracing the dark crimson gash which was imprinted on his face. 'An Ogilvy's sword never ploughed so deep a furrow.'

'They ploughed deep enough,' answered Quentin sadly; 'but they were tired at last, and my mother's entreaties procured mercy for me, when I was found to retain some spark of life; but although a learned monk of Aberbrothick, who chanced to be our guest at the fatal time, and narrowly escaped being killed in the fray, was permitted to bind my wounds, and finally to remove me to a place of safety, it was only on promise, given both by my mother and him, that I should become a monk.'

'A monk!' exclaimed the uncle. 'Holy Saint Andrew! that is what never befell me. No one, from my childhood upwards, ever so much as dreamed of making me a monk. And yet I wonder when I think of it; for you will allow that, excepting the reading and writing, which I could never learn, I would have made every whit as good a monk as my little gossip at Saint Martin's yonder. But I know not why none ever proposed the station to me. Oh so, fair nephew, you were to be a monk, then—and wherefore, I pray you?'

'That my father's house might be ended, either in the cloister or in the tomb,' answered Quentin, with deep feeling.

'I see,' answered his uncle—'I comprehend. Cunning rogues—very cunning! but on with your tale.'

'I have little more to tell,' said Durward, 'except that I was induced to take upon me the dress of a novice, and conformed to the cloister rules, and even learned to read and write.'

'To read and write!' exclaimed Le Balafré, who was one of that sort of people who think all knowledge is miraculous which chances to exceed their own. 'To write, you say, and to read! I cannot believe it—never Durward could write his name that ever I heard of, nor Lesly either. I can answer for one of them—I can no more write than I can fly. Now, in Saint Louis's name, how did they teach it you?'

'It was troublesome at first,' said Durward, 'but became more easy by use; and I was weak with my wounds and loss of blood, and desirous to gratify my preserver, Father Peter, and so I was the more easily kept to my task. But after several months' languishing my good kind mother died, and as my health was now fully restored, I communicated to my benefactor, who was also Sub-Prior of the Convent, my reluctance to take the vows; and it was agreed between us, since my vocation lay not to the cloister, that I should be sent out into the world to seek my fortune, and that, to save the Sub-Prior from the anger of the Ogilvies, my departure should have the appearance of flight; and to colour it, I brought off the Abbot's hawk

with me. But I was regularly dismissed, as will appear from the hand and seal of the Abbot himself.'

'That is right—that is well,' said his uncle. 'Our King cares little what other theft you may have made, but has a horror at anything like a breach of the cloister. And, I warrant you, you had no great treasure to bear your charges?'

'Only a few pieces of silver,' said the youth; 'for to you, fair uncle, I must make a free confession.'

'Alas!' replied Le Balafré, 'that is hard. But what then?—you may get rich in the service of the good King of France, where there is always wealth to be found, if a man has but the heart to seek it, at the risk of a little life or so.'

'I understand,' said Quentin, evading a decision to which he felt himself as yet scarcely competent, 'that the Duke of Burgundy keeps a more noble state than the King of France, and that there is more honour to be won under his banners—that good blows are struck there, and deeds of arms done; while the most Christian King, they say, gains his victories by his ambassadors' tongues. In my mind, honour cannot be won where there is no risk. Sure, this is—I pray you pardon me—an easy and almost slothful life, to mount guard round an elderly man whom no one thinks of harming, to spend summer-day and winter-night up in yonder battlements, and shut up all the while in iron cages, for fear you should desert your posts—uncle, uncle, it is but the hawk upon his perch, who is never carried out to the fields.'

'Now by Saint Martin of Tours, the boy has some spirit! a right touch of the Lesly in him. Hark you youth—Long live the King of France!—scarce a day but there is some commission in hand, by which some of his followers may win both coin and credit. Think not that the bravest and most dangerous deeds are done by daylight. I could tell you of some, as scaling castles, making prisoners, and the like, where one who shall be nameless has run higher risk, and gained greater favour, than any desperado in the train of desperate Charles of Burgundy. And if it please His Majesty to remain behind, and in the background, while such things are doing, he has the more leisure of

spirit to admire, and the more liberality of hand to reward, the adventurers, whose dangers, perhaps, and whose feats of arms, he can better judge of than if he had personally shared them. Oh, 'tis a sagacious and most politic monarch !'

His nephew paused, and then said, in a low but impressive tone of voice, 'The good Father Peter used often to teach me there might be much danger in deeds by which little glory was acquired. I need not say to you, fair uncle, that I do of course suppose that these secret commissions must needs be honourable.'

'For whom or for what take you me, fair nephew?' said Balafré, somewhat sternly; 'I have not been trained, indeed, in the cloister, neither can I write nor read. But I am your mother's brother; I am a loyal Lesly. Think you that I am like to recommend you to anything unworthy?'

'I cannot doubt your warranty, fair uncle,' said the youth; 'you are the only adviser my mishap has left me. But is it true, as fame says, that this King keeps a meagre Court here at his Castle of Plessis? No nobles or courtiers, none of his grand feudatories in attendance, none of the high officers of the Crown; secret councils, to which only low and obscure men are invited; rank and nobility depressed, and men raised from the lowest origin to the kingly favour—all this seems unregulated, resembles not the manners of his father, the noble Charles, who tore from the fangs of the English lion this more than half-conquered kingdom of France.'

'You speak like a giddy child,' said Le Balafré; 'and even as a child, you harp over the same notes on a new string. Look you: if the King employs Oliver Dain, his barber, to do what Oliver can do better than any peer of them all, is not the kingdom the gainer? If he bids his stout Provost-Marshals, Tristan, arrest such or such a seditious burgher, take off such or such a turbulent noble, the deed is done, and no more of it; when, were the commission given to a duke or peer of France, he might perhaps send the King back a defiance in exchange. If, again, the King pleases to give to plain Ludovic le Balafré a commission which he will execute, instead of

employing the High Constable, who would perhaps betray it, does it not show wisdom? But hark to the bell of Saint Martin's! I must hasten back to the Castle. Farewell—make much of yourself, and at eight to-morrow morning present yourself before the drawbridge, and ask the sentinel for me. You shall see the King, and learn to judge him for yourself—farewell.'

When left alone Quentin resorted to a solitary walk along the banks of the rapid Cher, having previously inquired of his landlord for one which he might traverse without fear of disagreeable interruption from snares and pitfalls, and there endeavoured to compose his turmoiled and scattered thoughts, and consider his future motions, upon which his meeting with his uncle had thrown some dubiety.

CHAPTER V.

The Bohemians.

THE manner in which Quentin Durward had been educated, was not of a kind to soften the heart, or perhaps to improve the moral feeling. He, with the rest of his family, had been trained to the chase as an amusement, and taught to consider war as their only serious occupation, and that it was the great duty of their lives stubbornly to endure, and fiercely to retaliate the attacks of their feudal enemies, by whom their race had been at last almost annihilated. And yet there mixed with these feuds a spirit or rude chivalry, and even courtesy, which softened their rigour; so that revenge, their only justice, was still prosecuted with some regard to humanity and generosity. The lessons of the worthy old monk had given young Durward still further insight into the duties of humanity towards others; and, considering the ignorance of the period, the general prejudices entertained in favour of a military life, and the manner in which he himself had been bred, the youth was disposed to feel more accurately the moral duties incumbent on his station than was usual at that time.

He reflected on his interview with his uncle with a sense of embarrassment and disappointment. His hopes had been

high ; for although intercourse by letters was out of the question, yet a pilgrim, or an adventurous trafficker, or a crippled soldier, sometimes brought Lesly's name to Glen-houlakin, and all united in praising his undaunted courage, and his success in many petty enterprises which his master had entrusted to him. Quentin's imagination had filled up the sketch in his own way, and assimilated his successful and adventurous uncle (whose exploits probably lost nothing in the telling) to some of the champions and knights-errant of whom minstrels sang, and who won crowns and kings' daughters, by dint of sword and lance. He was now compelled to rank his kinsman greatly lower in the scale of chivalry ; but blinded by the high respect paid to parents, and those who approach that character—moved by every early prejudice in his favour—inexperienced besides, and passionately attached to his mother's memory, he saw not, in the only brother of that dear relation, the character he truly held, which was that of an ordinary mercenary soldier, neither much worse nor greatly better than many of the same profession whose presence added to the distracted state of France.

Without being wantonly cruel, Le Balafré was, from habit, indifferent to human life and human suffering ; he was profoundly ignorant, greedy of booty, unscrupulous how he acquired it, and profuse in expending it on the gratification of his passions. The habit of attending exclusively to his own wants and interests had converted him into one of the most selfish animals in the world ; so that he was seldom able, as the reader may have remarked, to proceed far in any subject without considering how it applied to himself, or, as it is called, making the case his own, though not upon feelings connected with the golden rule, but such as were very different. To this must be added, that the narrow round of his duties and his pleasures had gradually circumscribed his thoughts, hopes, and wishes, and quenched in a great measure the wild spirit of honour, and desire of distinction in arms, by which his youth had been once animated. Balafré was, in short, a keen soldier, hardened, selfish, and narrow-minded ; active and bold in the discharge of his duty, but acknowledging few objects beyond it. Had his genius been of a more

extended character he would probably have been promoted to some important command, for the King, who knew every soldier of his bodyguard personally, reposed much confidence in Balafré's courage and fidelity; and, besides, the Scot had either wisdom or cunning enough perfectly to understand, and ably to humour, the peculiarities of that Sovereign. Still, however, his capacity was too much limited to admit of his rising to higher rank, and, though smiled on and favoured by Louis on many occasions, Balafré continued a mere Life-guardsman, or Scottish Archer.

Without seeing the full scope of his uncle's character, Quentin felt shocked at his indifference to the disastrous extirpation of his brother-in-law's whole family, and could not help being surprised, moreover, that so near a relative had not offered him the assistance of his purse, which, but for the generosity of Maitre Pierre, he would have been under the necessity of directly craving from him. He wronged his uncle, however, in supposing that this want of attention to his probable necessities was owing to avarice. Not precisely needing money himself at that moment, it had not occurred to Balafré that his nephew might be in exigencies; otherwise, he held a near kinsman so much a part of himself that he would have provided for the weal of the living nephew as he endeavoured to do for that of the deceased sister and her husband. But whatever was the motive, the neglect was very unsatisfactory to young Durward, and he wished more than once he had taken service with the Duke of Burgundy before he quarrelled with his forester. 'Whatever had then become of me,' he thought to himself, 'I should always have been able to keep up my spirits with the reflection, that I had, in case of the worst, a stout back-friend in this uncle of mine. But now I have seen him, there has been more help in a mere mechanical stranger than I have found in my own mother's brother, my countryman, and a cavalier! One would think the slash that has carved all comeliness out of his face had let at the same time every drop of gentle blood out of his body.'

Durward now regretted he had not had an opportunity to mention Maitre Pierre to Le Balafré, in the hope of

obtaining some further account of that personage; but his uncle's questions had followed fast on each other, and the summons of the great bell of Saint Martin of Tours had broken off their conference rather suddenly. That old man, he thought to himself, was crabbed and dogged in appearance, sharp and scornful in language, but generous and liberal in his actions; and such a stranger is worth a cold kinsman. I shall find out that man, which should be no difficult task, since he is as wealthy as the innkeeper says. He will give me good advice and if he goes to strange countries, as many such do, I know not but his may be as adventurous a service as that of those Guards of Louis.

As the Scottish youth made these reflections, he met two grave-looking men, apparently citizens of Tours, whom, doffing his cap with the reverence due from youth to age, he asked respectfully to direct him to the house of Maitre Pierre.

'The house of whom, my fair son?' said one of the passengers.

'Of Maitre Pierre, the great silk merchant, who planted all the mulberry-trees in the park yonder,' said Durwafd.

'Young man,' said one of them who was nearer to him, 'you have taken up an idle trade a little too early.'

'—And have chosen wrong subjects to practise your fooleries upon,' said the farther one, still more gruffly. 'The Syndic of Tours is not accustomed to be thus talked to by strolling jesters from foreign parts.'

Quentin was so much surprised by the causeless offence which these two decent-looking persons had taken at a very simple and civil question that he forgot to be angry at the rudeness of their reply, and stood staring after them as they walked on with amended pace, often looking back at him, as if they were desirous to get as soon as possible out of his reach.

He next met a party of vine-dressers, and addressed to them the same question; and, in reply, they demanded to know whether he wanted Maitre Pierre, the schoolmaster? or Maitre Pierre, the carpenter? or Maitre Pierre, the beadle? or half a dozen of Maitre Pierres besides. When none of these corresponded with the description of

the person after whom he inquired, the peasants accused him of jesting with them impertinently, and threatened to fall upon him and beat him. The oldest among them, who had some influence over the rest, prevailed on them to desist from violence.

' You see by his speech and his fool's cap,' said he, ' that he is one of the foreign mountebanks who are come into the country, and whom some call magicians and sooth-sayers, and some jugglers, and the like, and there is no knowing what tricks they have amongst them. And so let him pass quietly, and keep his way, as we shall keep ours. And you, friend, if you would shun worse, walk quietly on, in the name of God and trouble us no more about your Maitre Pierre, which may be another name for the devil, for aught we know.'

The Scot, finding himself much the weaker party, judged it his wisest course to walk on without reply; but the peasants, who at first shrank from him in horror at his supposed talents for sorcery, took heart of grace as he got to a distance, and having uttered a few cries and curses, finally gave them emphasis with a shower of stones, although at such a distance as to do little or no harm to the object of their displeasure. Quentin, as he pursued his walk, began to think, in his turn, either that he himself lay under a spell, or that the people of Touraine were the most stupid, brutal, and inhospitable of the French peasants. The next incident which came under his observation did not tend to diminish his opinion.

On a slight eminence, rising above the rapid and beautiful Cher, in the direct line of his path, two or three large chestnut trees were so happily placed as to form a distinguished and remarkable group; and beside them stood three or four peasants, motionless, with their eyes turned upwards, and fixed, apparently, upon some object amongst the branches of the tree next to them. Quentin hastened his pace, and ran lightly up the rising ground, in time enough to witness the ghastly spectacle which attracted the notice of these gazers—which was nothing less than the body of a man, convulsed by the last agony, suspended on one of the branches.

' Why do you not cut him down? ' said the young Scot,

whose hand was as ready to assist affliction as to maintain his own honour when he deemed it assailed.

One of the peasants pointed to a mark cut upon the bark of the tree, having a rude resemblance to a *fleur-de-lys*. Neither understanding nor heeding the import of this symbol, young Durward sprang lightly up into the tree, and, calling to those below to receive the body in their hands, cut the rope asunder in less than a minute after he had perceived the exigency.

But his humanity was ill seconded by the bystanders. So far from rendering Durward any assistance, they seemed terrified at the audacity of his action, and took to flight with one consent, as if they feared their merely looking on might have been construed into accession to his daring deed. The body, unsupported from beneath, fell heavily to earth, in such a manner, that Quentin, who presently jumped down, had the mortification to see that the last sparks of life were extinguished. He gave not up his charitable purpose, however, without further efforts. He freed the wretched man's neck from the fatal noose, undid the doublet, threw water on the face, and practised the other ordinary remedies resorted to for recalling suspended animation.

While he was thus humanely engaged, a wild clamour of tongues, speaking a language which he knew not, arose around him; and he had scarcely time to observe that he was surrounded by several men and women of a singular and foreign appearance, when he found himself roughly seized by both arms, while a naked knife, at the same moment, was offered to his throat.

'Slave!' said a man, in imperfect French, 'are you robbing him you have murdered? But we have you—and you shall pay for it.'

There were knives drawn on every side of him as these words were spoken, and the grim and distorted countenances which glared on him were like those of wolves rushing on their prey.

Still the young Scot's courage and presence of mind bore him out. 'What mean you, my masters?' he said; 'if that be your friend's body, I have just now cut him down, in pure charity, and you will do better to try to

recover his life than to misuse an innocent stranger to whom he owes his chance of escape.'

The women had by this time taken possession of the dead body, and continued the attempts to recover animation which Durward had been making use of, though with the like bad success; so that, desisting from their fruitless efforts, they seemed to abandon themselves to all the Oriental expressions of grief; the women making a piteous wailing, and tearing their long black hair, while the men seemed to rend their garments, and to sprinkle dust upon their heads. They gradually became so much engaged in their mourning rites that they bestowed no longer any attention on Durward, of whose innocence they were probably satisfied from circumstances. It would certainly have been his wisest plan to have left these wild people to their own courses, but he had been bred in almost reckless contempt of danger, and felt all the eagerness of youthful curiosity.

The disordered and yelling group were so different in appearance from any beings whom Quentin had yet seen that he was on the point of concluding them to be a party of Saracens, and was about to withdraw himself when a galloping of horse was heard, and the supposed Saracens, who had raised by this time the body of their comrade upon their shoulders, were at once charged by a party of French soldiers.

This sudden apparition changed the measured wailing of the mourners into regular shrieks of terror. The body was thrown to the ground in an instant, and those who were around it showed the utmost and most dexterous activity in escaping from the point of the lances which were levelled at them, with exclamations of 'Down with the accursed heathen thieves—take and kill—bind them like beasts—spear them like wolves!'

These cries were accompanied with corresponding acts of violence; but such was the alertness of the fugitives, the ground being rendered unfavourable to the horsemen by thickets and bushes, that only two were struck down and made prisoners. Quentin, whom fortune seemed at this period to have chosen for the butt of her shafts, was at the same time seized by the soldiers, and his arms,

in spite of his remonstrances, bound with a cord; those who apprehended him showing a readiness and dispatch in the operation, which proved them to be no novices in matters of police.

Looking anxiously to the leader of the horsemen, from whom he hoped to obtain liberty, Quentin knew not exactly whether to be pleased or alarmed upon recognizing in him the down-looking and silent companion of Maitre Pierre. True, whatever crime these strangers might be accused of, this officer might know, from the history of the morning, that he, Durward, had no connection with them whatever; but it was a more difficult question whether this sullen man would be either a favourable judge or a willing witness in his behalf, and he felt doubtful whether he would mend his condition by making any direct application to him.

But there was little leisure for hesitation. ‘Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André,’ said the down-looking officer to two of his band, ‘these same trees stand here quite convenient. I will teach these misbelieving, thieving sorcerers to interfere with the King’s justice. Dismount, my children, and do your office briskly.’

Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André were in an instant on foot, and Quentin observed that they had each a coil or two of ropes, which they hastily undid, and showed that, in fact, each coil formed a halter, with the fatal noose adjusted, ready for execution. The blood ran cold in Quentin’s veins, when he saw three cords selected, and perceived that it was proposed to put one around his own neck. He called on the officer loudly, reminding him of their meeting that morning, claimed the right of a free-born Scotsman, in a friendly and allied country, and denied any knowledge of the persons along with whom he was seized, or of their misdeeds.

The officer whom Durward thus addressed scarce deigned to look at him while he was speaking, and took no notice whatever of the claim he preferred to prior acquaintance. He barely turned to one or two of the peasants who were now come forward, either to volunteer their evidence against the prisoners, or out of curiosity, and said gruffly, ‘Was yonder young fellow with the vagabonds?’

'That he was, sir,' answered one of the rustics; 'he was the very first to cut down the rascal whom His Majesty's justices most deservedly hung up, as we told your worship.'

'It is enough that you have seen him intermeddle with the course of the King's justice, by attempting to recover an executed traitor,' said the officer. 'Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André, dispatch.'

'Stay, signior officer!' exclaimed the youth, in mortal agony—'here me speak—let me not die guiltlessly—my blood will be required of you by my countrymen in this world, and by Heaven's justice in that which is to follow.'

'I shall answer for my actions in both,' said the Provost coldly; and made a sign with his left hand to the executioners; then, with a smile of triumphant malice, touched with his forefinger his right arm, which hung suspended in a scarf, disabled probably by the blow which Durward had dealt him that morning.

'Miserable, vindictive wretch!' answered Quentin, persuaded by the action that private revenge was the sole motive of this man's rigour, and that no mercy whatever was to be expected from him.

'The poor youth raves,' said the functionary; 'speak a word of comfort to him ere he make his transit, Trois-Eschelles; you are a comfortable man in such cases, when a confessor is not to be had. Give him one minute of ghostly advice, and dispatch matters in the next. I must proceed on the rounds. Soldiers, follow me!'

The Provost rode on, followed by his guard, excepting two or three who were left to assist in the execution. The unhappy youth cast after him an eye almost darkened by despair, and thought he heard, in every tramp of his horse's retreating hoofs, the last slight chance of his safety vanish. He looked around him in agony, and was surprised, even in that moment, to see the stoical indifference of his fellow prisoners.

In this fatal predicament the youth cast a distracted look around him. 'Is there any good Christian who hears me,' he said, 'that will tell Ludovic Lesly of the Scottish Guard, called in this country Le Balafré, that his nephew is here basely murdered? '

The words were spoken in good time, for an Archer of the Scottish Guard, attracted by the preparations for the execution, was standing by, with one or two other chance-passengers, to witness what was passing.

'Take heed what you do,' he said to the executioners; 'if this young man be of Scottish birth, I will not permit him to have foul play.'

'Heaven forbid, Sir Cavalier,' said Trois-Eschelles; 'but we must obey our orders,' drawing Durward forward by one arm.

'The shortest play is ever the fairest,' said Petit-André, pulling him onward by the other.

But Quentin had heard words of comfort, and, exerting his strength, he suddenly shook off both the finishers of the law, and, with his arms still bound, ran to the Scottish Archer. 'Stand by me, countryman,' he said in his own language, 'for the love of Scotland and Saint Andrew! I am innocent—I am your own native landsman. Stand by me, as you shall answer at the last day!'

'By Saint Andrew! they shall make at you through me,' said the Archer, and unsheathed his sword.

'Cut my bonds, countryman,' said Quentin, 'and I will do something for myself.'

This was done with a touch of the Archer's weapon; and the liberated captive, springing suddenly on one of the Provost's guard, wrested from him a halberd with which he was armed. 'And now,' he said, 'come on, if you dare!'

The two officers whispered together.

'Ride after the Provost-Marshal,' said Trois-Eschelles, 'and I shall detain them here, if I can. Soldiers of the Provost's guard, stand to your arms.'

Petit-André mounted his horse and left the field, and the other Marshals-men in attendance drew together so hastily at the command of Trois-Eschelles that they suffered the other two prisoners to make their escape during the confusion. Perhaps they were not very anxious to detain them; for they had of late been sated with the blood of such wretches, and, like other ferocious animals, were, through long slaughter, become tired of carnage.

'We are strong enough to beat the proud Scots twice

over, if it be your pleasure,' said one of these soldiers to Trois-Eschelles.

But that cautious official made a sign to him to remain quiet, and addressed the Scottish Archer with great civility. 'Surely, sir, this is a great insult to the Provost-Marshal, that you should presume to interfere with the course of the King's justice, duly and lawfully committed to his charge.'

'Tell me at once,' said the Archer, 'what has this young man done?'

'Interfered,' answered Trois-Eschelles, with some earnestness, 'to take down the dead body of a criminal, when the *fleur-de-lys* was marked on the tree where he hung with my own proper hand.'

'How is this, young man?' said the Archer; 'how came you to have committed such an offence?'

'As I desire your protection,' answered Durward, 'I shall tell you the truth. I saw a man struggling on the tree, and I went to cut him down out of mere humanity. I thought neither of *fleur-de-lys* nor of clove-gilliflower, and had no more idea of offending the King of France than our Father the Pope.'

'What had you to do with the dead body, then?' said the Archer. 'You'll see them hanging, in the rear of this gentleman, like grapes on every tree, and you will have enough to do in this country if you go a-gleaning after the hangman. However, I shall not quit a countryman's cause if I can help it. Hark you, Master Marshals-man, you see this is entirely a mistake. You should have some compassion on so young a traveller. In our country at home he has not been accustomed to see such active proceedings as yours and your master's.'

'Not for want of need of them, Signior Archer,' said Petit-André, who returned at this moment. 'Stand fast, Trois-Eschelles, for here comes the Provost-Marshal; we shall presently see how he will relish having his work taken out of his hand before it is finished.'

'And in good time,' said the Archer, 'here come some of my comrades.'

Accordingly, as the Provost Tristan rode up with his patrol on one side of the little hill which was the scene

of the altercation, four or five Scottish Archers came as hastily up on the other, and at their head the Balafré himself.

Upon this urgency, Lesly showed none of that indifference towards his nephew of which Quentin had in his heart accused him; for he no sooner saw his comrade and Durward standing upon their defence, than he exclaimed, ‘Cunningham, I thank you. Gentlemen—comrades, lend me your aid. It is a young Scottish gentleman—my nephew—Lindesay—Guthrie—Tyrie, draw, and strike in !’

There was now every prospect of a desperate scuffle between the parties, who were not so disproportioned in numbers, but that the better arms of the Scottish cavaliers gave them an equal chance of victory. But the Provost-Marshal, either doubting the issue of the conflict, or aware that it would be disagreeable to the King, made a sign to his followers to forbear from violence, while he demanded of Balafré, who now put himself forward as the head of the other party, ‘What he, a cavalier of the King’s Body-Guard, purposed by opposing the execution of a criminal ?’

‘I deny that I do so,’ answered the Balafré. ‘Saint Martin ! there is, I think, some difference between the execution of a criminal and the slaughter of my own nephew ?’

‘Your nephew may be a criminal as well as another, Signior,’ said the Provost-Marshal; ‘and every stranger in France is amenable to the laws of France.’

‘Yes, but we have privileges, we Scottish Archers,’ said Balafré; ‘have we not, comrades ?’

‘Yes, yes,’ they all exclaimed together. ‘Privileges—privileges ! Long live King Louis—long live the bold Balafré—long live the Scottish Guard—and death to all who would infringe our privileges !’

‘Take reason with you, gentlemen cavaliers,’ said the Provost-Marshal; ‘consider my commission.’

‘We will have no reason at your hand,’ said Cunningham; ‘our own officers shall do us reason. We will be judged by the King’s grace, or by our own Captain, now that the Lord High Constable is not in presence.’

‘But hear you,’ said the Provost-Marshal, ‘this young fellow belongs not to you, and cannot share your privileges.’

'He is *my* nephew,' said the Balafré, with a triumphant air.

'But no Archer of the Guard, I think,' retorted Tristan l'Hermite.

The Archers looked on each other in some uncertainty.

'Stand to it yet, comrade,' whispered Cunningham to Balafré. 'Say he is engaged with us.'

'You say well, countryman,' answered Lesly; and, raising his voice, swore that he had that day enrolled his kinsman as one of his own retinue.

This declaration was a decisive argument.

'It is well, gentlemen,' said the Provost Tristan, who was aware of the King's nervous apprehension of disaffection creeping in among his Guards. 'You know, as you say, your privileges, and it is not my duty to have brawls with the King's Guards, if it is to be avoided. But I shall report this matter for the King's own decision; and I would have you to be aware that, in doing so, I act more mildly than perhaps my duty warrants me.'

So saying, he put his troop into motion, while the Archers, remaining on the spot, held a hasty consultation what was next to be done.

'We must report the matter to Lord Crawford, our Captain, in the first place, and have the young fellow's name put on the roll.'

'But, gentlemen, and my worthy friends and preservers,' said Quentin, with some hesitation, 'I have not yet determined whether to take service with you or no.'

'Then settle in your own mind,' said his uncle, 'whether you choose to do so, or be hanged; for I promise you that, nephew of mine though you are, I see no other chance of your 'scaping the gallows.'

This was an unanswerable argument, and reduced Quentin at once to acquiesce in what he might have otherwise considered as no very agreeable proposal; but the recent escape from the halter, which had been actually around his neck, would probably have reconciled him to a worse alternative than was proposed.

'He must go home with us,' said Cunningham; 'there is no safety for him out of our bounds whilst these man-hunters are prowling about.'

'May I not then abide for this night at the hostelry where I breakfasted, fair uncle?' said the youth—thinking, perhaps, like many a new recruit, that even a single night of freedom was something gained.

'Yes, fair nephew,' answered his uncle ironically, 'that we may have the pleasure of fishing you out of some canal or moat, or perhaps out of a loop of the Loire, knit up in a sack, for the greater convenience of swimming—for that is like to be the end on't.'

'And now for the Château,' continued Balafré; 'and my nephew will tell us by the way how he brought the Provost-Marshal on his shoulders, that we may know how to frame our report both to Crawford and Oliver.'

CHAPTER VI.

The Enrolment.

AN attendant upon the Archers having been dismounted, Quentin Durward was accommodated with his horse, and, in company of his martial countrymen, rode at a round pace towards the Castle of Plessis, about to become, although on his own part involuntarily, an inhabitant of that gloomy fortress, the outside of which had, that morning, struck him with so much surprise.

At their approach, the wicket was opened, and the drawbridge fell. One by one they entered; but when Quentin appeared, the sentinels crossed their pikes, and commanded him to stand, while bows were bent, and harquebusses aimed at him from the walls—a rigour of vigilance used, notwithstanding that the young stranger came in company of a party of the garrison, nay, of the very body which furnished the sentinels who were then upon duty.

Le Balafré, who had remained by his nephew's side on purpose, gave the necessary explanations, and, after some considerable hesitation and delay, the youth was conveyed under a strong guard to the Lord Crawford's apartment.

Balafré and Cunningham followed Durward and the guard to the apartment of their officer, by whose dignified appearance, as well as with the respect paid to him by

these proud soldiers, who seemed to respect no one else, the young man was much and strongly impressed.

Lord Crawford laid his book somewhat peevishly aside upon the entrance of these unexpected visitors, and demanded, in his broad national dialect, 'What, in the foul fiend's name, they lacked now ?'

Le Balafré, with more respect than perhaps he would have shown to Louis himself, stated at full length the circumstances in which his nephew was placed, and humbly requested his Lordship's protection. Lord Crawford listened very attentively. He could not but smile at the simplicity with which the youth had interfered in behalf of the hanged criminal, but he shook his head at the account which he received of the ruffle betwixt the Scottish Archers and the Provost-Marshal's guard.

'How often,' he said, 'must I tell you that the foreign soldier should beat himself modestly and decorously towards the people of the country, if you would not have the whole dogs of the town at your heels? However, if you must have a quarrel, I would rather it were with that loon of a Provost than any one else; and I blame you less for this onslaught than for other frays which you have made, Ludovic, for it was but natural and kindlike to help your young kinsman. This simple bairn must come to no skaith either; so give me the roll of the company yonder down from the shelf, and we shall add his name to the troop, that he may enjoy the privileges.'

'May it please your Lordship——' said Durward.

'Is the lad crazed!' exclaimed his uncle. 'Would you speak to his Lordship without a question asked?'

'Patience, Ludovic,' said Lord Crawford, 'and let us hear what the bairn has to say.'

'Only this, if it may please your Lordship,' replied Quentin, 'that I told my uncle formerly I had some doubts about entering this service. I have now to say that they are entirely removed, since I have seen the noble and experienced commander under whom I am to serve; for there is authority in your look.'

'Well said, my bairn,' said the old Lord, not insensible to the compliment; 'we have had some experience, had

God sent us grace to improve by it, both in service and in command. There you stand, Quentin, in our honourable corps of Scottish Body-Guards, as esquire to your uncle, and serving under his lance. I trust you will do well, for you should be a right man-at-arms, and you are come of gentle kindred. Ludovic, you will see that your kinsman follow his exercise diligently, for we shall have spears breaking one of these days.'

'By my hilts, and I am glad of it, my Lord—this peace makes cowards of us all. I myself feel a sort of decay of spirit, closed up in this cursed dungeon of a Castle.'

'Well, a bird whistled in my ear,' continued Lord Crawford, 'that the old banner will be soon dancing in the field again.'

'I shall drink a cup the deeper this evening to that very tune,' said Balafré.

'Thou wilt drink to any tune,' said Lord Crawford; 'and I fear me, Ludovic, you will drink a bitter browst of your own brewing one day.'

Lesly, a little abashed, replied 'that it had not been his wont for many a day; but his Lordship knew the custom of the company, to have a carouse to the health of a new comrade.'

'True,' said the old leader, 'I had forgotten the occasion. I shall send a few stoups of wine to assist your carouse; but let it be over by sunset. And, hark you—let the soldiers for duty be carefully pricked off; and see that none of them be more or less partakers of your debauch.'

'Your Lordship will be lawfully obeyed,' said Ludovic; 'and your health duly remembered.'

'Perhaps,' said Lord Crawford, 'I may look in myself upon your mirth—just to see that all is carried decently.'

'Your Lordship will be most dearly welcome,' said Ludovic; and the whole party retreated in high spirits to prepare for their military banquet, to which Lesly invited about a score of his comrades, who were pretty much in the habit of making their mess together.

The banquet was joyous in the highest degree; and the guests gave vent to the whole current of their national partiality on receiving into their ranks a recruit from their

beloved fatherland. Old Scottish songs were sung, old tales of Scottish heroes told—the achievements of their fathers, and the scenes in which they were wrought, were recalled to mind: and, for a time, the rich plains of Touraine seemed converted into the mountainous and sterile regions of Caledonia.

When their enthusiasm was at high flood, and each was endeavouring to say something to enhance the dear remembrance of Scotland, it received a new impulse from the arrival of Lord Crawford. A chair of state had been reserved for him at the upper end of the table; for, according to the manners of the age, and the constitution of that body, although their leader and commander under the King and High Constable, the members of the corps (as we should now say, the privates) being all ranked as noble by birth, their Captain sat with them at the same table without impropriety, and might mingle when he chose in their festivity, without derogation from his dignity as commander.

At present, however, Lord Crawford declined occupying the seat prepared for him, and, bidding them 'hold themselves merry,' stood looking on the revel with a countenance which seemed greatly to enjoy it.

'Let him alone,' whispered Cunningham to Lindesay, as the latter offered the wine to their noble Captain, 'let him alone—hurry no man's cattle—let him take it of his own accord.'

In fact, the old Lord, who at first smiled, shook his head, and placed the untasted wine-up before him, began presently, as if it were in absence of mind, to sip a little of the contents, and in doing so fortunately recollecting that it would be ill-luck did he not drink a draught to the health of the gallant lad who had joined them this day. The pledge was filled, and answered, as may be well supposed, with many a joyous shout, when the old leader proceeded to acquaint them that he had possessed Master Oliver with an account of what had passed that day: 'And as,' he said, 'the scraper of chins has no great love for the stretcher of throats, he has joined me in obtaining from the King an order, commanding the Provost to suspend all proceedings, under whatever pre-

tence, against Quentin Durward; and to respect, on all occasions, the privileges of the Scottish Guard.'

Another shout broke forth, the cups were again filled till the wine sparkled on the brim, and there was an acclaim to the health of the noble Lord Crawford, the brave conservator of the privileges and rights of his countrymen. The good old Lord could not but in courtesy do reason to this pledge also, and gliding into the ready chair, as it were, without reflecting what he was doing, he caused Quentin to come up beside him, and assailed him with many more questions concerning the state of Scotland, and the great families there, than he was well able to answer. It was now that, while the military ardour of the company augmented with each flagon which they emptied, Cunningham called on them to drink the speedy hoisting of the *Oriflamme* (the royal banner of France).

'And a breeze of Burgundy to fan it!' echoed Lindesay.

'With all the soul that is left in this worn body do I accept the pledge, bairns,' echoed Lord Crawford; 'and as old as I am, I trust I may see it flutter yet. You are all true servants to the French crown, and wherefore should you not know there is an envoy come from Duke Charles of Burgundy, with a message of an angry favour.'

'I saw the Count of Crèvecoeur's equipage, horses and retinue,' said another of the guests, 'down at the inn yonder, at the Mulberry Grove. They say the King will not admit him into the Castle.'

'Now, Heaven send him an ungracious answer!' said Guthrie; 'but what is it he complains of?'

'A world of grievances upon the frontier,' said Lord Crawford; 'and latterly, that the King has received under his protection a lady of his land, a young countess, who has fled from Dijon, because, being a ward of the Duke, he would have her marry his favourite, Campo-basso.'

'And has she actually come here alone, my Lord?' said Lindesay.

'Nay, not altogether alone, but with the old Countess, her kinswoman, who has yielded to her cousin's wishes in this matter.'

'And will the King,' said Cunningham, 'he being the Duke's feudal sovereign, interfere between the Duke and

his ward, over whom Charles has the same right, as, were he himself dead, the King would have over the heiress of Burgundy ?'

'The King will be ruled, as he is wont, by rules of policy ; and you know,' continued Crawford, 'that he has not publicly received these ladies, nor placed them under the protection of his daughters, the Lady of Beaujeau or the Princess Joan, so, doubtless, he will be guided by circumstances. He is our master—but it is no treason to say, he will chase with the hounds and run with the hare with any prince in Christendom.'

'But the Duke of Burgundy understands no such doubling,' said Cunningham.

'No,' answered the old Lord ; 'and, therefore, it is likely to make work between them.'

'Well, Saint Andrew further the fray !' said Le Balafré. 'I had it foretold me ten, ay, twenty years since, that I was to make the fortune of my house by marriage. Who knows what may happen, if once we come to fight for honour and ladies' love, as they do in the old romances ?'

'I think I saw the Countess,' said another soldier, 'when I was upon guard this morning at the inner barrier ; for she and another were brought into the Chateau in close litters.'

'Shame ! shame ! Arnot !' said Lord Crawford ; 'a soldier on duty should say nought of what he sees. Besides,' he added, 'why should these litters contain this very same Countess Isabelle de Croye ?'

'Nay, my lord,' replied Arnot, 'I know nothing of it save this, that my coutelier fell in with Doguin the muleteer, who brought back the litters to the inn, for they belong to the fellow of the Mulberry Grove yonder—he of the Fleur-de-Lys, I mean—and so Doguin asked Saunders Steed to take a cup of wine.'

'He told him in secrecy, if it pleases your Lordship,' continued Arnot, 'that these two ladies whom he had convoyed up to the Castle in close litters were great ladies, who had been living in secret at his master's house for some days, and that the King had visited them more than once very privately, and had done them great honour ;

and that they had fled up to the Castle, as he believed, for fear of the Count de Crèvecœur, the Duke of Burgundy's ambassador, whose approach was just announced by an advance courier.'

'Ay, Andrew, so these are the facts?' said Guthrie; 'then I will be sworn it was the Countess whose voice I heard singing to the lute as I came even now through the inner court—the sound came from the bay-windows of the Dauphin's Tower; and such melody was there as no one ever heard before in the Castle of Plessis of the Park.'

'Hark! is not the Cathedral bell tolling to vespers? Sure it cannot be that time yet?'

'In faith, the bell rings but too justly on the hour,' said Cunningham; 'yonder the sun is sinking on the west side of the fair plain.'

'Ay,' said the Lord Crawford, 'is it even so? Well, lads, we must live within compass. Fair and soft goes far—slow fire makes sweet malt—to be merry and wise is a sound proverb. One other rouse to the weal of old Scotland, and then each man to his duty.'

The parting-cup was emptied, and the guests dismissed—the stately old Baron taking the Balafré's arm. A serious countenance did he bear as he passed through the two courts which separated his lodging from the festal chamber, and solemn was the farewell caution, with which he prayed Ludovic to attend to his nephew's training.

Meanwhile, not a word that was spoken concerning the beautiful Countess Isabelle had escaped the young Durward, who, conducted into a small cabin, which he was to share with his uncle's page, made his new and lowly abode the scene of much high musing. The reader will easily imagine that the young soldier should build a fine romance on such a foundation as the supposed, or rather the assumed, identification of the fair cup-bearer of Maitre Pierre, with a fugitive countess, of rank and wealth, flying from the pursuit of a hated lover, the favourite of an oppressive guardian, who abused his feudal power. There was an interlude in Quentin's vision concerning Maitre Pierre, who seemed to exercise such authority even over the formidable officer from whose hands he had that day, with much difficulty, made his escape. At length the youth's

reveries were broken in upon by the return of his uncle, who commanded Quentin to bed, that he might rise betimes in the morning, and attend to His Majesty's ante-chamber, to which he was called by his hour of duty, along with five of his comrades.

CHAPTER VII.

The Envoy.

HAD sloth been a temptation by which Durward was easily beset, the noise with which the *caserne* of the guards resounded after the first toll of primes had certainly banished the syren from his couch; but the discipline of his father's tower, and of the convent of Aberbrothick, had taught him to start with the dawn; and he donned his clothes gaily, amid the sounding of bugles, and the clash of armour, which announced the change of the vigilant guards—some of whom were returning to barracks after their nightly duty, whilst some were marching out to that of the morning—and others, again, amongst whom was his uncle, were arming for immediate attendance upon the person of Louis. Quentin Durward soon put on, with the feelings of so young a man on such an occasion, the splendid dress and arms appertaining to his new situation; and his uncle, who looked with great accuracy and interest to see that he was completely fitted out in every respect, did not conceal his satisfaction at the improvement which had been thus made in his nephew's appearance. ‘If you prove as faithful and bold as you are well favoured, I shall have in you one of the handsomest and best esquires in the Guard, which cannot but be an honour to your mother's family. Follow me to the presence-chamber; and see you keep close at my shoulder.’

On a signal given, the Guards were put into motion by the command of Le Balafré, who acted as officer upon the occasion; and, they marched into the hall of audience, where the King was expected immediately.

New as Quentin was to scenes of splendour, the effect of that which was now before him rather disappointed the expectations which he had formed of the brilliancy of a Court. There were household officers, indeed, richly

attired ; there were guards gallantly armed, and there were domestics of various degrees. But he saw none of the ancient counsellors of the kingdom, none of the high officers of the crown, heard none of the names which in those days sounded an alarm to chivalry : saw none either of those generals or leaders, who, possessed of the full prime of manhood, were the strength of France, or of the more youthful and fiery nobles, those early aspirants after honour, who were her pride. The jealous habits—the reserved manners—the deep and artful policy of the King, had estranged this splendid circle from the throne, and they were only called around it upon certain stated and formal occasions, when they went reluctantly, and returned joyfully, as the animals in the fable are supposed to have approached and left the den of the lion.

The very few persons who seemed to be there in the character of counsellors were mean-looking men, whose countenances sometimes expressed sagacity, but whose manners showed they were called into a sphere for which their previous education and habits had qualified them but indifferently. One or two persons, however, did appear to Durward to possess a more noble mien, and the strictness of the present duty was not such as to prevent his uncle communicating the names of those whom he thus distinguished.

With the Lord Crawford, who was in attendance, dressed in the rich habit of his office, and holding a leading staff of silver in his hand, Quentin, as well as the reader, was already acquainted. Among others who seemed of quality, the most remarkable was the Count de Dunois. Although accounted complete in all the exercises of chivalry, and possessed of much of the character of what was then termed a perfect knight, the person of the Count was far from being a model of romantic beauty. He was under the common size, though very strongly built, and his legs rather curved outwards, into that make which is more convenient for horseback than elegant in a pedestrian. His shoulders were broad, his hair black, his complexion swarthy, his arms remarkably long and nervous. The features of his countenance were irregular, even to ugliness ; yet, after all, there was an air of conscious worth and

nobility about the Count de Dunois which stamped, at the first glance, the character of the highborn nobleman, and the undaunted soldier. His mien was bold and upright, his step free and manly, and the harshness of his countenance was dignified by a glance like an eagle, and a frown like a lion. His dress was a hunting suit, rather sumptuous than gay, and he acted on most occasions as Grand Huntsman.

Upon the arm of his relation Dunois, walking with step so slow and melancholy, that he seemed to rest on his kinsman and supporter, came Louis Duke of Orleans, the first Prince of the blood royal (afterwards King, by the name of Louis XII), and to whom the guards and attendants rendered their homage as such. The jealously-watched object of Louis's suspicion, this Prince, who, failing the King's offspring, was heir to the kingdom, was not suffered to absent himself from Court, and, while residing there, was alike denied employment and countenance. The dejection which his degraded and almost captive state naturally impressed on the deportment of this unfortunate Prince was at this moment greatly increased by his consciousness that the King meditated, with respect to him, one of the most cruel and unjust actions which a tyrant could commit, by compelling him to give his hand to the Princess Joan of France, the younger daughter of Louis, to whom he had been contracted in infancy, but whose deformed person rendered the insisting upon such an agreement an act of abominable rigour.

The exterior of this unhappy Prince was in no respect distinguished by personal advantages; and in mind, he was of a gentle, mild, and beneficent disposition, qualities which were visible even through the veil of extreme dejection with which his natural character was at present obscured.

Very different was the conduct of the proud Cardinal and Prelate, John of Balue, the favourite minister of Louis for the time, whose rise and character bore as close a resemblance to that of Wolsey, as the difference betwixt the crafty and politic Louis and the headlong and rash Henry VIII of England would permit. The former had raised his minister from the lowest rank to the dignity,

or at least the emoluments, of Grand Almoner of France, loaded him with benefices, and obtained for him the hat of a cardinal; and although he was too cautious to repose in the ambitious *Balue* the unbounded power and trust which Henry placed in Wolsey, yet he was more influenced by him than by any other of his avowed counsellors.

'Is the King aware,' said Dunois to the Cardinal, 'that the Burgundian Envoy is peremptory in demanding an audience?'

'He is,' answered the Cardinal; 'and here, as I think, comes the all-sufficient Oliver Dain, to let us know the royal pleasure.'

As he spoke, a remarkable person, who then divided the favour of Louis with the proud Cardinal himself, entered from the inner apartment, but without any of that important and consequential demeanour which marked the full-blown dignity of the churchman. On the contrary, this was a little, pale, meagre man, whose black silk jerkin and hose, without either coat, cloak, or cassock, formed a dress ill-qualified to set off to advantage a very ordinary person. He spoke earnestly for a few moments with the Count de Dunois, who instantly left the chamber, while the tonsor glided quietly back towards the royal apartment whence he had issued, every one giving place to him; which civility he only acknowledged by the most humble inclination of the body, excepting in a very few instances, where he made one or two persons the subject of envy to all the other courtiers by whispering a single word in their ear; and at the same time muttering something of the duties of his place, he escaped from their replies, as well as from the eager solicitations of those who wished to attract his notice. Ludovic Lesly had the good fortune to be one of the individuals who, on the present occasion, were favoured by Oliver with a single word, to assure him that his matter was fortunately terminated.

Presently he had another proof of the same agreeable tidings; for Quentin's old acquaintance, Tristan l'Hermite, the Provost-Marshal of the Royal Household, entered the apartment, and came straight to the place where Le Balafré was posted. This formidable officer's uniform, which

was very rich, had only the effect of making his sinister countenance and bad mien more strikingly remarkable, and the tone which he meant for conciliatory was like nothing so much as the growling of a bear. The import of his words, however, was more amicable than the voice in which they were pronounced. He regretted the mistake which had fallen between them on the preceding day, and observed it was owing to the Sieur Le Balafré's nephew not wearing the uniform of his corps, or announcing himself as belonging to it, which had led him into the error for which he now asked forgiveness.

Ludovic Lesly made the necessary reply, and as soon as Tristan had turned away, observed to his nephew that they had now the distinction of having a mortal enemy from henceforward in the person of this dreaded officer.

Quentin could not help being of his uncle's opinion, for, as Tristan parted from them, it was with the look of angry defiance which the bear casts upon the hunter whose spear has wounded him. Indeed, even when less strongly moved, the sullen eye of this official expressed a malevolence of purpose which made men shudder to meet his glance; and the thrill of the young Scot was the deeper and more abhorrent, that he seemed to himself to feel on his shoulders the grasp of the two death-doing functionaries of this fatal officer.

Meanwhile, Oliver, after he had prowled around the room in his stealthy manner—all, even the highest officers, making way for him, and loading him with their ceremonious attentions, which his modesty seemed desirous to avoid—again entered the inner apartment, the doors of which were presently thrown open, and King Louis entered the presence-chamber.

Quentin, like all others, turned his eyes upon him; and started so suddenly that he almost dropped his weapon, when he recognized in the King of France that silk merchant, Maitre Pierre, who had been the companion of his morning walk. Singular suspicions respecting the real rank of this person had at different times crossed his thoughts; but this, the proved reality, was wilder than his wildest conjecture.

The stern look of his uncle, offended at this breach of the decorum of his office, recalled him to himself; but not a little was he astonished when the King, whose quick eye had at once discovered him, walked straight to the place where he was posted, without taking notice of any one else. 'So,' he said, 'young man, I am told you have been brawling on your first arrival in Touraine; but I pardon you, as it was chiefly the fault of a foolish merchant, who thought your Caledonian blood required to be heated in the morning with *Vin de Beaulne*. If I can find him, I will make him an example to those who debauch my Guards. Balafré,' he added, speaking to Lesly, 'your kinsman is a fair youth, though a fiery. We love to cherish such spirits, and mean to make more than ever we did of the brave men who are around us. Let the year, day, hour, and minute of your nephew's birth be written down, and given to Oliver Dain.'

Le Balafré bowed to the ground, and reassumed his erect military position, as one who would show by his demeanour his promptitude to act in the King's quarrel or defence. Quentin, in the meantime, recovered from his first surprise, studied the King's appearance more attentively, and was surprised to find how differently he now construed his deportment and features than he had done at their first interview.

Presently after the King's appearance, the Princesses of France, with the ladies of their suite, entered the apartment. With the eldest, afterwards married to Peter of Bourbon, our story has but little to do. She was tall, and rather handsome, possessed eloquence, talent, and much of her father's sagacity, who reposed great confidence in her, and loved her as well perhaps as he loved any one.

The younger sister, the unfortunate Joan, the destined bride of the Duke of Orleans, advanced timidly by the side of her sister, conscious of a total want of those external qualities which women are most desirous of possessing, or being thought to possess. The King (who loved her not) stepped hastily to her as she entered. 'How now!' he said, 'our world-contemning daughter. Are you robed for a hunting-party, or for the convent, this morning? Speak—answer.'

'For which your Highness pleases, sir,' said the Princess, scarce raising her voice above her breath.

'Ay, doubtless, you would persuade me, it is your desire to quit the Court, Joan, and renounce the world and its vanities. Ha! maiden, would you have it thought that we, the first-born of Holy Church, would refuse our daughter to Heaven? Our Lady and Saint Martin forbid we should refuse the offering, were it worthy of the altar, or were your vocation in truth thitherward!'

Louis meantime resumed, after a moment's mental devotion: 'No, fair daughter, I and another know your real mind better. Ha! fair cousin of Orleans, do we not? Approach, fair sir, and lead this devoted vestal of ours to her horse.'

Orleans started when the King spoke, and hastened to obey him; but with such precipitation of step and confusion that Louis called out, 'Nay, cousin, rein your gallantry, and look before you. Why, what a headlong matter a gallant's haste is on some occasions! You had well nigh taken Anne's hand instead of her sister's. Sir, must I give Joan's to you myself?'

The unhappy Prince looked up, and shuddered like a child, when forced to touch something at which it has instinctive horror—then, making an effort, took the hand which the Princess neither gave nor yet withheld. As they stood, her cold damp fingers enclosed in his trembling hand, with their eyes looking on the ground, it would have been difficult to say which of these two youthful beings was rendered more utterly miserable.

'And now to horse, gentlemen and ladies. We will ourselves lead forth our daughter of Beaujeau,' said the King; 'and God's blessing and Saint Hubert's be on our morning sport.'

'I am, I fear, doomed to interrupt it, Sire,' said the Count de Dunois—the Burgundian Envoy is before the gates of the Castle, and demands an audience.'

The flourish of trumpets in the courtyard now announced the arrival of the Burgundian nobleman. All in the presence-chamber made haste to arrange themselves according to their proper places of precedence, the King and his daughters remaining in the centre of the assembly.

The Count of Crèvecoeur, a renowned and undaunted warrior, entered the apartment; and, contrary to the usage among the envoys of friendly powers, he appeared all armed, excepting his head, in a gorgeous suit of the most superb Milan armour, made of steel, inlaid and embossed with gold, which was wrought into the fantastic taste called Arabesque.

'Approach, Seignior Count de Crèvecoeur,' said Louis, after a moment's glance at his commission; 'we need not our cousin's letters of credence either to introduce to us a warrior so well-known or to assure us of your highly deserved credit with your master. We trust your fair partner, who shares some of our ancestral blood, is in good health. Had you brought her in your hand, Seignior Count, we might have thought you wore your armour, on this unwonted occasion, to maintain the superiority of her charms against the amorous chivalry of France. As it is, we cannot guess the reason of this complete panoply.'

'Sire,' replied the ambassador, 'the Count of Crèvecoeur must lament his misfortune, and entreat your forgiveness, that he cannot, on this occasion, reply with such humble deference as is due to the royal courtesy with which your Majesty has honoured him. But, although it is only the voice of Philip Crèvecoeur de Cordès which speaks, the words which he utters must be those of his gracious Lord and Sovereign the Duke of Burgundy.'

'And what has Crèvecoeur to say in the words of Burgundy?' said Louis, with an assumption of sufficient dignity. 'Yet hold—remember that in this presence, Philip Crèvecoeur de Cordès speaks to him who is his Sovereign's Sovereign.'

Crèvecoeur bowed, and then spoke aloud: 'King of France, the mighty Duke of Burgundy once more sends you a written schedule of the wrongs and oppressions committed on his frontiers by your Majesty's garrisons and officers; and the first point of inquiry is, whether it is your Majesty's purpose to make him amends for these injuries?'

The King, looking slightly at the memorial which the herald delivered to him upon his knee, said, 'These matters have been already long before our Council. Of the injuries complained of, some are in requital of those sustained by

my subjects, some are affirmed without any proof, some have been retaliated by the Duke's garrisons and soldiers; and if there remain any which fall under none of those predicaments, we are not, as a Christian prince, averse to make satisfaction for wrongs actually sustained by our neighbour, though committed not only without our countenance, but against our express order.'

'I shall convey your Majesty's answer,' said the ambassador, 'to my most gracious master; yet, let me say, that, as it is in no degree different from the evasive replies which have already been returned to his just complaints, I cannot hope that it will afford the means of re-establishing peace and friendship betwixt France and Burgundy.'

'Be that at God's pleasure,' said the King. 'It is not for dread of your master's aims, but for the sake of peace only, that I return so temperate an answer to his injurious reproaches. Proceed with your errand.'

'My master's next demand,' said the ambassador, 'is, that your Majesty will cease your secret and underhand dealings with his towns of Ghent, Liege, and Malines. He requests that your Majesty will recall the secret agents, by whose means the discontent of his good citizens of Flanders is inflamed; and dismiss from your Majesty's dominions, or rather deliver up to the condign punishment of their liege lord, those traitorous fugitives, who, having fled from the scene of their machinations, have found too ready a refuge in Paris, Orleans, Tours, and other French cities.'

'Say to the Duke of Burgundy,' replied the King, 'that I know of no such indirect practices as those with which he injuriously charges me; that my subjects of France have frequent intercourse with the good cities of Flanders, for the purpose of mutual benefit by free traffic, which it would be as much contrary to the Duke's interest as mine to interrupt; and that many Flemings have residence in my kingdom, and enjoy the protection of my laws, for the same purpose; but none, to our knowledge, for those of treason or mutiny against the Duke. Proceed with your message; you have heard my answer.'

'As formerly, Sire, with pain,' replied the Count of Crèvecœur; 'it not being of that direct or explicit nature

which the Duke, my master, will accept, in atonement for a long train of secret machinations, not the less certain, though now disavowed by your Majesty. But I proceed with my message. The Duke of Burgundy further requires the King of France to send back to his dominions without delay, and under a secure safeguard, the persons of Isabelle Countess of Croye, and of her relation and guardian, the Countess Hameline, of the same family, in respect the said Countess Isabelle, being, by the law of the country, and the feudal tenure of her estates, the ward of the said Duke of Burgundy, has fled from his dominions, and from the charge which he, as a careful guardian, was willing to extend over her, and is here maintained in secret by the King of France, and by him fortified in her contumacy to the Duke, her natural lord and guardian, contrary to the laws of God and man, as they ever have been acknowledged in civilized Europe. Once more I pause for your Majesty's reply.'

'You did well, Count de Crèvecoeur,' said Louis scornfully, 'to begin your embassy at an early hour; for if it be your purpose to call on me to account for the flight of every vassal whom your master's heady passion may have driven from his dominions, the beadroll may last till sunset. Who can affirm that these ladies are in my dominions? who can presume to say, if it be so, that I have either countenanced their flight hither, or have received their offers of protection? Nay, who is it will assert, that, if they are in France, their place of retirement is within my knowledge?'

'Sire,' said Crèvecoeur, 'may it please your Majesty, I was provided with a witness on this subject—one who beheld these fugitive ladies in the inn called the Fleur-de-Lys, not far from this Castle—one who saw your Majesty in their company, though under the unworthy disguise of a burgess of Tours—one who received from them, in your royal presence, messages and letters to their friends in Flanders—all which he conveyed to the hand and ear of the Duke of Burgundy.'

'Bring him forward,' said the King; 'place the man before my face who dares maintain these palpable falsehoods.'

' You speak in triumph, Sire; for you are well aware that this witness no longer exists. When he lived, he was called Zamet Magraubin, by birth one of those Bohemian wanderers. He was yesterday, as I have learned, executed by a party of your Majesty's Provost-Marshal, to prevent, doubtless, his standing here, to verify what he said of this matter to the Duke of Burgundy, in presence of his Council, and of me, Philip Crèvecoeur de Cordès.'

' Now, by our Lady of Embrun!' said the King, ' so gross are these accusations, and so free of consciousness am I of aught that approaches them, that, by the honour of a King, I laugh, rather than am wroth at them. My Provost-guard daily put to death, as is their duty, thieves and vagabonds; and is my crown to be slandered with whatever these thieves and vagabonds may have said to our hot cousin of Burgundy and his wise counsellors? I pray you, tell my kind cousin, if he loves such companions, he had best keep them in his own estates; for here they are like to meet short shrift and a tight cord.'

' My master needs no such subjects, Sir King,' answered the Count, in a tone more disrespectful than he had yet permitted himself to make use of; ' for the noble Duke uses not to inquire of witches, wandering Egyptians, or others, upon the destiny and fate of his neighbours and allies.'

' We have had patience enough, and to spare,' said the King, interrupting him; ' and since your sole errand here seems to be for the purpose of insult, we shall send some one in our name to the Duke of Burgundy—convinced, in thus demeaning yourself towards us, you have exceeded your commission, whatever that may have been.'

' On the contrary,' said Crèvecoeur, ' I have not yet acquitted myself of it. Hearken, Louis of Valois, King of France—hearken, nobles and gentlemen, who may be present—hearken, all good and true men—and you, Toison d'Or,' addressing the herald, ' make proclamation after me. I, Philip Crèvecoeur of Cordès, Count of the Empire, and Knight of the honourable and princely Order of the Golden Fleece, in the name of the most puissant Lord and Prince, Charles, by the Grace of God, Duke of Burgundy, do give you, Louis, King of France, openly

to know, that you having refused to remedy the various griefs, wrongs, and offences, done and wrought by you, or by and through your aid, suggestion, and instigation, against the said Duke and his loving subjects, he, by my mouth, renounces all allegiance and fealty towards your crown and dignity—pronounces you false and faithless; and defies you as a Prince, and as a man. There lies my gage, in evidence of what I have said.'

So saying, he plucked the gauntlet off his right hand, and flung it down on the floor of the hall.

Until this last climax of audacity, there had been a deep silence in the royal apartment during the extraordinary scene; but no sooner had the clash of the gauntlet, when cast down, been echoed by the deep voice of Toison d'Or, the Burgundian herald, with the ejaculation, 'Vive Bourgogne!' than there was a general tumult. While Dunois, Orleans, old Lord Crawford, and one or two others, whose rank authorized their interference, contended which should lift up the gauntlet, the others in the hall exclaimed, 'Strike him down! Cut him to pieces! Comes he here to insult the King of France in his own palace!'

But the King appeased the tumult by exclaiming, in a voice like thunder, which overawed and silenced every other sound, 'Silence, my lieges! lay not a hand on the man, not a finger on the gage! And you, Sir Count, of what is your life composed, or how is it warranted, that you thus place it on the cast of a die so perilous? Or is your Duke made of a different metal from other princes, since he thus asserts his pretended quarrel in a manner so unusual?'

'He is indeed framed of a different and more noble metal than the other princes of Europe,' said the undaunted Count of Crèvecoeur; 'for, when not one of them dared to give shelter to you—to *you*, I say, King Louis—when you were yet only Dauphin, an exile from France, and pursued by the whole bitterness of your father's revenge, and all the power of his kingdom, you were received and protected like a brother by my noble master, whose generosity of disposition you have so grossly misused. Farewell, Sire, my mission is discharged.'

So saying, the Count de Crèvecoeur left the apartment abruptly, and without further leave-taking.

'After him—after him—take up the gauntlet and after him!' said the King. 'I mean not you, Dunois, nor you, my Lord of Crawford, who, I think, may be too old for such hot frays; nor you, cousin of Orleans, who are too young for them. My Lord Cardinal—my Lord Bishop of Auxerre—it is your holy office to make peace among princes; do you lift the gauntlet, and remonstrate with Count Crèvecoeur on the sin he has committed in thus insulting a great monarch in his own Court, and forcing us to bring the miseries of war upon his kingdom and that of his neighbour.'

Upon this direct personal appeal, the Cardinal Balue proceeded to lift the gauntlet, with such precaution as one would touch an adder, so great was apparently his aversion to this symbol of war, and presently left the royal apartment to hasten after the challenger.

Louis paused and looked round the circle of his courtiers, most of whom, except such as we have already distinguished, being men of low birth, and raised to their rank in the King's household for other gifts than courage or feats of arms, looked pale on each other, and had obviously received an unpleasant impression from the scene which had just been acted. Louis gazed on them with contempt, and then said aloud, 'Although the Count of Crèvecoeur be presumptuous and overweening, it must be confessed that in him the Duke of Burgundy has as bold a servant as ever bore message for a prince. I would I knew where to find as faithful an Envoy to carry back my answer.'

'You do your French nobles injustice, Sire,' said Dunois; 'not one of them but would carry a defiance to Burgundy on the point of his sword.'

'And, Sire,' said old Crawford, 'you wrong also the Scottish gentlemen who serve you. I, or any of my followers, being of meet rank, would not hesitate a moment to call yonder proud Count to a reckoning; my own arm is yet strong enough for the purpose, if I have but your Majesty's permission.'

'But your Majesty,' continued Dunois, 'will employ us

in no service through which we may win honour to ourselves, to your Majesty, or to France.'

'Say, rather,' said the King, 'that I will not give way, Dunois, to the headlong impetuosity, which, on some punctilio of chivalry, would wreck yourselves, the throne, France, and all. There is not one of you who knows not how precious every hour of peace is at this moment, when so necessary to heal the wounds of a distracted country; yet there is not one of you who would not rush into war on account of the tale of a wandering gipsy, or of some errant damosel. Here comes the Cardinal, and we trust with more pacific tidings. How now, my Lord—have you brought the Count to reason and to temper?'

'Sire,' said Balue, 'my task has been difficult. I put it to yonder proud Count, how he dared to use towards your Majesty, the presumptuous reproach with which his audience had broken up, and which must be understood as proceeding, not from his master, but from his own insolence, and as placing him therefore in your Majesty's discretion, for what penalty you might think proper.'

'You said right,' replied the King; 'and what was his answer?'

'The Count,' continued the Cardinal, 'had at that moment his foot in the stirrup, ready to mount; and, on hearing my expostulation, he turned his head without altering his position. 'Had I,' said he, 'been fifty leagues distant, and had heard by report that a question vituperative of my Prince had been asked by the King of France, I had, even at that distance, instantly mounted, and returned to disburden my mind of the answer which I gave him but now.'

'I said, sirs,' said the King, turning round, without any show of angry emotion, 'that in the Count Philip of Crèvecœur, our cousin the Duke possesses as worthy a servant as ever rode at a prince's right hand. But you prevailed with him to stay?'

'To stay for twenty-four hours; and in the meanwhile to receive again his gage of defiance,' said the Cardinal: 'he has dismounted at the Fleur-de-Lys.'

'See that he be nobly attended and cared for, at our

charges,' said the King; 'such a servant is a jewel in a prince's crown.'

CHAPTER VIII.

The Sentinel.

LEFT to himself for the greater part of the day, Quentin had hardly reached his little cabin, in order to make some necessary changes in his dress, when his worthy relative required to know how he had been spending his time.

A low tap at the door just then announced a visitor. It was presently opened, and Oliver Dain, or Mauvais, or Diable, for by all these names he was known, entered the apartment.

He entered with stooping shoulders, a humble and modest look, and threw such a degree of civility into his address to the Seignior Balafré, that no one who saw the interview could have avoided concluding that he came to ask a boon of the Scottish Archer. He congratulated Lesly on the excellent mien of his young kinsman whom His Majesty had selected to execute a piece of duty this afternoon.

'Selected him?' said Balafré, in great surprise. 'Selected me, I suppose, you mean?'

'I mean precisely as I speak,' replied the barber, in a mild but decided tone; 'the King has a commission with which to entrust your nephew.'

'Why, wherefore, and for what reason?' said Balafré; 'why does he choose the boy, and not me?'

'I can go no further back than your own ultimate cause, Seignior Le Balafré; such are His Majesty's commands. But,' said he, 'if I might use the presumption to form a conjecture, it may be His Majesty has work to do, fitter for a youth like your nephew than for an experienced warrior like yourself, Seignior Balafré. Wherefore, young gentleman, get your weapons and follow me. Bring with you a harquebuss, for you are to mount sentinel.'

'Sentinel!' said the uncle. 'Are you sure you are right, Master Oliver? The inner guards of the Castle have ever been mounted by those only who have, like me, served twelve years in our honourable body.'

'I am quite certain of His Majesty's pleasure,' said Oliver, 'and must no longer delay executing it.'

'But,' said Le Balafré, 'my nephew is not even a free Archer, being only an Esquire, serving under my lance.'

'Pardon me,' answered Oliver, 'the King sent for the register not half an hour since, and enrolled him among the Guard. Have the goodness to assist to put your nephew in order for the service.'

Balafré, who had no ill nature, or even much jealousy, in his disposition, hastily set about adjusting his nephew's dress, and giving him directions for his conduct under arms.

Quick and sharp of wit, as well as ardent in fancy, Quentin saw visions of higher importance in this early summons to the royal presence, and his heart beat high at the anticipation of rising into speedy distinction.

Leaving his uncle he followed his conductor, Master Oliver, who, without crossing any of the principal courts, led him through a maze of stairs, vaults, and galleries, into a large and spacious latticed gallery.

'You will keep watch here,' said Oliver, in a low whisper, as if he had feared to awaken the echoes that lurked in this huge and dreary apartment.

'What are the orders and signs of my watch?' answered Quentin, in the same suppressed tone.

'Is your harquebuss loaded?' replied Oliver, without answering his query.

'That,' answered Quentin, 'is soon done;' and proceeded to charge his weapon. When this was performed, Oliver said, 'You are placed here by His Majesty's command, young man, and you will not be long here without knowing wherefore you are summoned. Meantime your walk extends along this gallery. You are permitted to stand still, but on no account to sit down, or quit your weapon. Farewell, and keep good watch.'

'Good watch!' thought the youthful soldier as his guide stole away from him with that noiseless gliding step which was peculiar to him, and vanished through a side-door behind the arras. 'Good watch! but upon whom, and against whom?—for what, save bats or rats, are there

here to contend with. Well, it is my duty, I suppose, and I must perform it.'

At the opposite extremities of the long hall or gallery were two large doors, probably opening into different suites of apartments, to which the gallery served as a medium of mutual communication. As the sentinel directed his solitary walk betwixt these two entrances, which formed the boundary of his duty, he was startled by a strain of music, which was suddenly waked near one of those doors, and which, at least in his imagination, was the same voice by which he had been enchanted on the preceding day.

These delightful sounds were but partially heard—they languished, lingered, ceased entirely, and were from time to time renewed after uncertain intervals. But Quentin had matter enough to fill up his reverie during the intervals of fascination. He could not doubt, from the report of his uncle's comrades, and the scene which had passed in the presence-chamber that morning, that the syren who thus delighted his ears was not, as he had profanely supposed, the daughter or kinswoman of a base *cabaretier*, but the same disguised and distressed Countess, for whose cause kings and princes were now about to buckle on armour and put lance in rest. A hundred wild dreams, such as romantic and adventurous youth readily nourished in a roimantic and adventurous age, chased from his eyes the bodily presentment of the actual scene, and substituted their own bewildering delusions, when at once, and rudely, they were banished by a rough grasp laid upon his weapon, and a harsh voice which exclaimed, close to his ear, 'Ha ! Sir Squire, it seems you keep sleepy ward here !'

The voice was the tuneless, yet impressive and ironical tone of Maitre Pierre, and Quentin, suddenly recalled to himself, saw, with shame and fear, that he had, in his reverie, permitted Louis himself—entering probably by some secret door, and gliding along by the wall, or behind the tapestry—to approach him so nearly as almost to master his weapon.

Louis, whose tyrannical disposition was founded less on natural ferocity or cruelty of temper, than on cold-blooded policy and jealous suspicion, had a share of that caustic

severity which would have made him a despot in private conversation, and always seemed to enjoy the pain which he inflicted on occasions like the present. But he did not push his triumph far, and contented himself with saying : ' Your service of the morning has already overpaid some negligence in so young a soldier. Have you dined ? '

Quentin answered humbly in the negative.

' Poor, lad,' said Louis, in a softer tone than he usually spoke in, ' hunger has made him drowsy. I know your appetite is a wolf,' he continued ; ' and I shall save you. Can you yet hold out an hour without food ? '

' Four-and-twenty, Sire,' replied Durward, ' or I were no true Scot.'

' I would not for another kingdom be the pasty which should encounter you after such a vigil,' said the King ; ' but the question now is, not of your dinner, but of my own. I admit to my table this day, and in strict privacy, the Cardinal Balue and this Burgundian—this Count de Crèvecœur, and something may chance—'

He stopped, and remained silent, with a deep and gloomy look. As the King was in no haste to proceed, Quentin at length ventured to ask what his duty was to be in these circumstances.

' To keep watch at the beauffet, with your loaded weapon,' said Louis ; ' and if there is treason, to shoot the traitor dead.'

' Treason, Sire ! and in this guarded Castle ! ' exclaimed Durward.

' You think it impossible,' said the King, not offended, it would seem, by his frankness ; ' but our history has shown that treason can creep into an auger-hole. Treason excluded by guards ! Oh, you silly boy ! who shall exclude the treason of those very warders ? '

' Their Scottish honour,' answered Durward boldly.

' True ; most right—you please me,' said the King cheerfully ; ' the Scottish honour was ever true, and I trust it accordingly. But treason ! Hark you ; I shall keep my eye on that insolent Count ; ay, and on the Churchman too, whom I hold not too faithful. When I say, *Ecosse, en avant*, shoot Crèvecœur dead on the spot.'

'It is my duty,' said Quentin, 'your Majesty's life being endangered.'

'Certainly—I mean it not otherwise,' said the King, 'What should I get by slaying this insolent soldier? Follow me.'

Louis led his young Life-guardsman, for whom he seemed to have taken a special favour, through the side-door by which he had himself entered, saying, as he showed it him, 'He who would thrive at Court must know the private wickets and concealed staircases as well as the principal entrances, folding-doors, and portals.'

After several turns and passages, the King entered a small vaulted room, where a table was prepared for dinner with three covers. The whole furniture and arrangements of the room were plain almost to meanness. A beauffet, or folding and movable cupboard, held a few pieces of gold and silver plate, and was the only article in the chamber which had, in the slightest degree, the appearance of royalty. Behind this cupboard, and completely hidden by it, was the post which Louis assigned to Quentin Durward; and after having ascertained, by going to different parts of the room, that he was invisible from all quarters, he gave him his last charge: 'Remember the word, *Ecosse, en avant*; and so soon as ever I utter these sounds, throw down the screen—spare not for cup or goblet, and be sure you take good aim at Crèvecoeur. If your piece fail, cling to him, and use your knife. (Oliver and I can deal with the Cardinal.'

Having thus spoken, he whistled aloud, and summoned into the apartment Oliver, who was premier valet of the chamber as well as barber, and who now appeared, attended by two old men, who were the only assistants or waiters at the royal table. So soon as the King had taken his place, the visitors were admitted; and Quentin, though himself unseen, was so situated as to remark all the particulars of the interview.

The King welcomed his visitors with a degree of cordiality which Quentin had the utmost difficulty to reconcile with the directions which he had previously received, and the purpose for which he stood behind the beauffet with

his deadly weapon in readiness. Not only did Louis appear totally free from apprehensions of any kind, but one would have supposed that those visitors whom he had done the high honour to admit to his table were the very persons in whom he could most unreservedly confide, and whom he was most willing to honour.

But whilst the guests, in obedience to the King, were in the act of placing themselves at the table, His Majesty darted one keen glance on them, and then instantly directed his look to Quentin's post. This was done in an instant; but the glance conveyed so much doubt and hatred towards his guests, that no room was left for doubting that the sentiments of Louis continued unaltered, and his apprehensions unabated. He was, therefore, more than ever astonished at the deep veil under which that Monarch was able to conceal the movements of his jealous disposition.

Appearing to have forgotten entirely the language which Crèvecoeur had held towards him in the face of his Court, the King conversed with him of old times, of events which had occurred during his own exile in the territories of Burgundy, and inquired respecting all the nobles with whom he had been then familiar.

Louis gave unrestrained way to the satirical gaiety of disposition which sometimes enlivened the darker shades of his character. Leading, of course, the conversation, his remarks, always shrewd and caustic, and often actually witty, were seldom good-natured, and the anecdotes with which he illustrated them were often more humorous than delicate; but in no one word, syllable, or letter, did he betray the state of mind of one who, apprehensive of assassination, had in his apartment an armed soldier, with his piece loaded, in order to prevent or anticipate an attack on his person.

The Count of Crèvecoeur gave frankly to the King's humour; while the smooth Churchman laughed at every jest. In about an hour and a half the tables were drawn; and the King, taking courteous leave of his guests, gave the signal that it was his desire to be alone.

So soon as all, even Oliver, had retired, he called Quentin from his place of concealment; but with a voice so faint

that the youth could scarce believe it to be the same as had so lately given animation to the jest, and zest to the tale. As he approached, he saw an equal change in his countenance. The light of assumed vivacity had left the King's eyes, the smile had deserted his face, and he exhibited all the fatigue of a celebrated actor when he has finished the exhausting representation of some favourite character, in which, while upon the stage, he had displayed the utmost vivacity.

'Your watch is not yet over,' said he to Quentin. 'Refresh yourself for an instant—yonder table affords the means—I shall then instruct you in your further duty. Meanwhile, it is ill talking between a full man and a fasting.'

He threw himself back on his seat, covered his brow with his hand, and was silent.

CHAPTER IX.

The Hall of Roland.

LOUIS the XIth of France, though the sovereign in Europe who was fondest and most jealous of power, desired only its substantial enjoyment; and though he knew well enough, and at times exacted strictly, the observances due to his rank, was in general singularly careless of show.

With patience, which most other princes would have considered as degrading, and not without a sense of amusement, the Monarch of France waited till his Life-guardsman had satisfied the keenness of a youthful appetite. It may be supposed, however, that Quentin had too much sense and prudence to put the royal patience to a long or tedious proof; and indeed he was repeatedly desirous to break off his repast ere Louis would permit him. 'Take a cup of wine; but mind you be cautious of the wine-pot—it is the vice of your countrymen as well as of the English, who, lacking that folly, are the choicest soldiers ever wore armour. And now wash speedily and follow me.'

Quentin obeyed, and, conducted by a different, but as

maze-like an approach as he had formerly passed, he followed Louis into the Hall of Roland.

'Take notice,' said the King imperatively. 'No man, save Oliver or myself, enters here this evening; but ladies will come hither. You may answer if they address you, but, being on duty, your answer must be brief; and you must neither address them in your turn, nor engage in any prolonged discourse. But hearken to what they say. Your ears, as well as your hands, are mine—I have bought you, body and soul. Therefore, if you hear aught of their conversation, you must retain it in memory until it is communicated to me, and then forget it. And now I think better on it, it will be best that you pass for a Scottish recruit, who has come straight down from his mountains, and has not yet acquired our most Christian language. Right! So, if they speak to you, you will *not* answer—this will free you from embarrassment, and lead them to converse without regard to your presence. You understand me. Farewell. Be wary, and you have a friend.'

Some time later a door creaked and jingled but, alas! it was not at that end of the hall from which the lute had been heard. It opened, however, and a female figure entered. By her imperfect and unequal gait, which showed to peculiar disadvantage as she traversed this long gallery, Quentin at once recognized the Princess Joan, and, with the respect which became his situation, drew himself up in a fitting attitude of silent vigilance, and lowered his weapon to her as she passed. She acknowledged the courtesy by a gracious inclination of her head, and he had an opportunity of seeing her countenance more distinctly than he had in the morning.

While Quentin followed her with eyes in which curiosity was blended with compassion, for every look and motion of the Princess seemed to call for the latter feeling, two ladies entered from the upper end of the apartment.

One of these was the young person who, upon Louis's summons, had served him with fruit, while Quentin made his memorable breakfast at the Fleur-de-Lys. Invested now with all the mysterious dignity belonging to the nymph of the lute, and proved, besides (at least in Quentin's estimation), to be the high-born heiress of a rich earldom,

her beauty made ten times the impression upon him which it had done when he beheld in her one whom he deemed the daughter of a paltry innkeeper, in attendance upon a rich and humorous old burgler. He now wondered what fascination could ever have concealed from him her real character. Yet her dress was nearly as simple as before. Her head-dress was but a veil of crape, which was entirely thrown back, so as to leave her face uncovered; and it was only Quentin's knowledge of her actual rank which gave in his estimation new elegance to her beautiful shape, and to her regular features, brilliant complexion, and dazzling eyes, an air of conscious nobleness which enhanced their beauty.

Had death been the penalty, Durward must needs have rendered to this beauty and her companion the same homage as he had just paid to the royalty of the Princess. They received it as those who were accustomed to the deference of inferiors, and returned it with courtesy; but he thought that the young lady coloured slightly, kept her eyes on the ground, and seemed embarrassed, though in a trifling degree, as she returned his military salutation. This must have been owing to her recollection of the stranger at the Fleur-de-Lys; but did that discomposure express displeasure? This question he had no means to determine.

Quentin was instantly wrapped up in attention to the meeting of the Princess Joan with these stranger ladies. She had stood still upon their entrance, in order to receive them, conscious perhaps that motion did not become her well; and as she was somewhat embarrassed in receiving and repaying their compliments, the elder stranger, ignorant of the rank of the party whom she addressed, was led to pay her salutation in a manner rather as if she conferred than received an honour through the interview.

'I rejoice, madam,' she said, with a smile, which was meant to express condescension at once and encouragement, 'that we are at length permitted the society of such a respectable person of our own sex as you appear to be. I must say that my niece and I have had but little for which to thank the hospitality of King Louis.'

'I am sorry,' said the Princess, faltering with the awkward embarrassment of the interview, 'that we have

been unable, hitherto, to receive you according to your deserts. Your niece, I trust, is better satisfied ?'

' Much—much better than I can express,' answered the youthful Countess.

' Perhaps,' said the elder lady, ' it is his politic intention to mew us up here until our lives' end, that he may seize on our estates, after the extinction of the ancient house of Croye. The Duke of Burgundy was not so cruel; he offered my niece a husband, though he was a bad one.'

' I should have thought the veil preferable to an evil husband,' said the Princess, with difficulty finding an opportunity to interpose a word.

' One would at least wish to have the choice, madam,' replied the voluble dame. ' It is, Heaven knows, on account of my niece that I speak ; for myself, I have long laid aside thoughts of changing my condition. I see you smile, but, it is true ; yet that is no excuse for the King, whose conduct, like his person, has more resemblance to that of old Michaud, the money-changer of Ghent, than to the successor of Charlemagne.'

' Hold ! ' said the Princess, with some asperity in her tone ; ' remember you speak of my father.'

' Of your father ! ' replied the Burgundian lady in surprise.

' Of my father,' repeated the Princess, with dignity. ' I am Joan of France. But fear not, madam,' she continued, in the gentle accent which was natural to her, ' you designed no offence, and I have taken none. Command my influence to render your exile, and that of this interesting young person, more supportable. Alas ! it is but little I have in my power, but it is willingly offered.'

Deep and submissive was the reverence with which the Countess Hameline de Croye, so was the elder lady called, received the obliging offer of the Princess's protection.

The Princess Joan then took her own chair with a dignity which became her, and compelled the two strangers to sit, one on either hand. They spoke together, but in such a low tone that the sentinel could not overhear their discourse, and only remarked that the Princess seemed to bestow much of her regard on the younger and more interesting lady ; and that the Countess Hameline, though

speaking a great deal more, attracted less of the Princess's attention by her full flow of conversation and compliment than did her kinswoman by her brief and modest replies to what was addressed to her.

The conversation of the ladies had not lasted a quarter of an hour, when the door at the lower end of the hall opened, and a man entered shrouded in a riding-cloak. Mindful of the King's injunction, and determined not to be a second time caught slumbering, Quentin instantly moved towards the intruder, and, interposing between him and the ladies, requested him to retire instantly.

'By whose command?' said the stranger, in a tone of contemptuous surprise.

'By that of the King,' said Quentin firmly, 'which I am placed here to enforce.'

'Not against Louis of Orleans,' said the Duke, dropping his cloak.

The young man hesitated a moment; but how enforce his orders against the first Prince of the blood, about to be allied, as the report now generally went, with the King's own family?

'Your Highness,' he said, 'is too great that your pleasure should be withheld by me. I trust your Highness will bear me witness that I have done the duty of my post, so far as your will permitted.'

'Go to—you shall have no blame, young soldier,' said Orleans; and, passing forward, paid his compliments to the Princess.

The colour which mounted into the pale cheek of the unfortunate Joan evinced that this addition to the company was anything but indifferent to her. She hastened to present the Prince to the two ladies of Croye, who received him with the respect due to his eminent rank; and the Princess, pointing to a chair, requested him to join their conversation party.

The Duke declined the freedom of assuming a seat in such society; but, taking a cushion from one of the settles, he laid it at the feet of the beautiful young Countess of Croye, and so seated himself, that, without appearing to neglect the Princess, he was enabled to bestow the greater share of his attention on her lovely neighbour.

At first, it seemed as if this arrangement rather pleased than offended his destined bride. She encouraged the Duke in his gallantries towards the fair stranger, and seemed to regard them as complimentary to herself. But the Duke of Orleans, though accustomed to subject his mind to the stern yoke of his uncle when in the King's presence, had enough of princely nature to induce him to follow his own inclinations whenever that restraint was withdrawn; and his high rank giving him a right to overstep the ordinary ceremonies, and advance at once to familiarity, his praises of the Countess Isabelle's beauty became so energetic, and flowed with such unrestrained freedom that the presence of the Princess appeared wellnigh forgotten.

The Princess, unable to sustain the neglect of her lover, sank backwards on her chair, with a sigh, which at once recalled the Duke from the land of romance, and induced the Lady Hameline to ask whether Her Highness found herself ill.

'A sudden pain shot through my forehead,' said the Princess, attempting to smile; 'but I shall be presently better.'

Her increasing paleness contradicted her words, and induced the Lady Hameline to call for assistance, as the Princess was about to faint.

The Duke, biting his lip, and cursing the folly which could not keep guard over his tongue, ran to summon the Princess's attendants, who were in the next chamber; and when they came hastily, with the usual remedies, he could not but, as a cavalier and a gentleman, give his assistance to support and to recover her. His voice was the most powerful means of recalling her to herself, and just as the swoon was passing away, the King himself entered the apartment.

CHAPTER X.

The Politician.

As Louis entered the Gallery, he bent his brows in the manner we have formerly described as peculiar to him,

and sent, from under his gathered and gloomy eyebrows, a keen look on all around.

When, by this momentary and sharpened glance, he had reconnoitred the cause of the bustle which was in the apartment, his first address was to the Duke of Orleans.

'You here, my fair cousin?' he said; and turning to Quentin, added sternly, 'Had you not charge?'

'Forgive the young man, Sire,' said the Duke; 'he did not neglect his duty; but I was informed that the Princess was in this gallery.'

'And I warrant you would not be withstood when you came hither to pay your court,' said the King, whose detestable hypocrisy persisted in representing the Duke as participating in a passion which was felt only on the side of his unhappy daughter.

The Duke of Orleans raised his head, as if about to reply, but the instinctive reverence, not to say fear, of Louis, in which he had been bred from childhood, chained up his voice.

'And Joan has been ill?' said the King; 'but do not be grieved Louis; it will soon pass away; lend her your arm to her apartment, while I shall conduct these strange ladies to theirs.'

The order was given in a tone which amounted to a command, and Orleans accordingly made his exit with the Princess at one extremity of the gallery, while the King, ungloving his right hand, courteously handed the Countess Isabelle and her kinswoman to their apartment, which opened from the other. He bowed profoundly as they entered, and remained standing on the threshold for a minute after they had disappeared; then, with slow and pensive step, and eyes fixed on the ground, Louis paced towards Quentin Durward, who, expecting his share of the royal displeasure, viewed his approach with no little anxiety.

'You have done wrong,' said the King, raising his eyes, and fixing them firmly on him when he had come within a yard of him—'you have done foul wrong, and deserve to die. Speak not a word in defence! What

had you to do with dukes or princesses?—what with *any* thing but my order?

'So please your Majesty,' said the young soldier, 'what could I do?'

'What could you do when your post was forcibly passed?' answered the King scornfully. 'What is the use of that weapon on your shoulder? You should have levelled your piece, and if the presumptuous rebel did not retire on the instant, he should have died within this very hall? Go—pass into these farther apartments. In the first you will find a large staircase, which leads to the inner Bailley; there you will find Oliver Dain. Send him to me—do you begone to your quarters. As you do value your life, be not so loose of your tongue as you have been this day slack of your hand.'

Well pleased to escape so easily, yet with a soul which revolted at the cold-blooded cruelty which the King seemed to require from him in the execution of his duty, Durward took the road indicated, hastened downstairs, and communicated the royal pleasure to Oliver, who was waiting in the court beneath. The wily tonsor bowed, sighed, and smiled, as, with a voice even softer than ordinary, he wished the youth a good evening; and they parted, Quentin to his quarters, and Oliver to attend the King.

When the favourite attendant entered the Gallery of Roland, he found the King seated pensively upon the chair which his daughter had left some minutes before. The Monarch's first address was an unpleasant one: 'So Oliver, your fine schemes are melting like snow before the south wind!'

'I have heard with concern that all is not well, Sire,' answered Oliver.

'Not well!' exclaimed the King, rising and hastily marching up and down the gallery. 'All is ill, man—and as ill nearly as possible; so much for your fond romantic advice, that I, of all men, should become a protector of distressed damsels! I tell you Burgundy is arming, and on the eve of closing an alliance with England. Singly, I might cajole or defy them; but united, united! All your fault, Oliver, who counselled me to receive the women,

and to use the services of that damned Bohemian to carry messages to their vassals.'

'My liege,' said Oliver, 'you know my reasons. The Countess's domains lie between the frontiers of Burgundy and Flanders—her castle is almost impregnable—her rights over neighbouring estates are such as, if well supported, cannot but give much annoyance to Burgundy, were the lady but wedded to one who should be friendly to France.'

'It is, it is a tempting bait,' said the King; 'and where am I to find such a friend? Were I to bestow her upon any one of our mutinous and ill-ruled nobles, would it not be rendering him independent? And has it not been my policy for years to prevent them from becoming so? But cannot your fertile brain devise some scheme?'

Oliver paused for a long time, then at last replied, 'What if a bridal could be accomplished betwixt Isabelle of Croye and young Adolphus, the Duke of Gueldres?'

'What!' said the King, in astonishment; 'sacrifice her, and she, too, so lovely a creature, to the furious wretch who deposed, imprisoned, and has often threatened to murder, his own father! No, Oliver, no—'

'My invention is exhausted, Sire,' said the counsellor; 'I can remember no one who, as husband to the Countess of Croye, would be likely to answer your Majesty's views.'

'Nay, Oliver,' said the King, 'I leaned not so much—that is, so *very* much—on character; but I think Isabelle's bridegroom should be something less publicly and generally abhorred than Adolphus of Gueldres. For example, since I myself must suggest some one, why not William de la Marck?'

'Sire,' said Oliver, 'I cannot complain of your demanding too high a standard of moral excellence in the happy man, if the Wild Boar of Ardennes can serve your turn. De la Marck? Why, he is the most notorious robber and murderer on all the frontiers—excommunicated by the Pope for a thousand crimes.'

'We shall have him released from the sentence, friend Oliver—Holy Church is merciful.'

'Almost an outlaw,' continued Oliver, 'and under the ban of the Empire.'

'We shall have the ban taken off, friend Oliver,' continued the King, in the same tone.

'And admitting him to be of noble birth,' said Oliver, 'he has the manners, the face, and the outward form, as well as the heart, of a Flemish butcher. She will never accept of him.'

'His mode of wooing, if I mistake him not,' said Louis, 'will render it difficult for her to make a choice.'

'I was far wrong indeed, when I taxed your Majesty with being over scrupulous,' said the counsellor. 'On my life, the crimes of Adolphus are but virtues to those of De la Marck! And then how is he to meet with his bride? Your Majesty knows he dare not stir far from his own forest of Ardennes.'

'That must be cared for,' said the King; 'and, in the first place, the two ladies must be acquainted privately that they can be no longer maintained at this Court, except at the expense of a war between France and Burgundy, and that I am desirous they should depart secretly from my dominions.'

'They will demand to be conveyed to England,' said Oliver; 'and we shall have her return to Flanders with an island lord, having a round fair face, long brown hair, and three thousand archers at his back.'

'No no,' replied the King; 'we dare not (you understand me) so far offend our fair cousin of Burgundy as to let her pass to England. It would bring his displeasure as certainly as our maintaining her here. No, no; to the safety of the Church alone we shall venture to commit her; and the utmost we can do is to connive at the Ladies Hameline and Isabelle de Croye departing in disguise, and with a small retinue, to take refuge with the Bishop of Liege.'

'And if that convent protect her from William de la Marck, when he knows of your Majesty's favourable intentions, I have mistaken the man.'

'Why, yes,' answered the King, 'thanks to our secret supplies of money, De la Marck has together a handsome handful of as unscrupulous soldiery as ever were outlawed; with which he contrives to maintain himself among the woods, in such a condition as makes him formidable both

to the Duke of Burgundy and the Bishop of Liege. He lacks nothing but some territory which he may call his own; and this being so fair an opportunity to establish himself by marriage, I think that he will find means to win and wed, without more than a hint on our part. The Duke of Burgundy will then have such a thorn in his side as no lancet of our time will easily cut out from his flesh. The Boar of Ardennes, whom he has already outlawed, strengthened by the possession of that fair lady's lands, with the discontented Liegeois to boot—let Charles then think of wars with France when he will, or rather let him bless his stars if she war not with him. How do you like the scheme, Oliver, ha?'

'Rarely,' said Oliver, 'save and except the doom which confers that lady on the Wild Boar of Ardennes.'

'And now to business. I must determine the ladies of Croye to a speedy and secret flight, under sure guidance. This will be easily done; we have but to hint the alternative of surrendering them to Burgundy. You must find means to let William de la Marck know of their motions, and let him choose his own time and place to push his suit. I know a fit person to travel with them.'

'May I ask to whom your Majesty commits such an important charge?' asked the tonsor.

'To a foreigner, be sure,' replied the King; 'one who has neither kin nor interest in France to interfere with the execution of my pleasure; and who knows too little of the country and its factions to suspect more of my purpose than I choose to tell him—in a word, I design to employ the young Scot who sent you hither but now.'

He then parted with his counsellor, and presently afterwards went to the apartment of the Ladies of Croye. Few persuasions beyond his mere licence would have been necessary to determine their retreat from the Court of France, upon the first hint that they might not be eventually protected against the Duke of Burgundy; but it was not so easy to induce them to choose Liege for the place of their retreat. They entreated and requested to be transferred to Bretagne or Calais, where, under protection of the Duke of Bretagne, or King of England, they might remain in a state of safety, until the Sovereign of

Burgundy should relent in his rigorous purpose towards them. But neither of these places of safety at all suited the plans of Louis, and he was at last successful in inducing them to adopt that which did coincide with them.

The power of the Bishop of Liege for their defence was not to be questioned, since his ecclesiastical dignity gave him the means of protecting the fugitives against all Christian princes; while, on the other hand, his secular forces, if not numerous, seemed at least sufficient to defend his person, and all under his protection, from any sudden violence. The difficulty was to reach the little Court of the Bishop in safety; but for this Louis promised to provide, by spreading a report that the Ladies of Croye had escaped from Tours by night, under fear of being delivered up to the Burgundian Envoy, and had taken their flight towards Bretagne. He also promised them the attendance of a small, but faithful retinue, and letters to the commanders of such towns and fortresses as they might pass, with instructions to use every means for protecting and assisting them on their journey.

The Ladies of Croye were so far from objecting to the hasty departure which he proposed, that they even anticipated his project, by entreating to be permitted to set forward that same night. The Lady Hameline was already tired of a place where there were neither admiring courtiers nor festivities to be witnessed; and the Lady Isabelle thought she had seen enough to conclude that, were the temptation to become a little stronger, Louis XI, not satisfied with expelling them from his Court, would not hesitate to deliver her up to her irritated Suzerain, the Duke of Burgundy. Lastly, Louis himself acquiesced readily in their hasty departure, anxious to preserve peace with Duke Charles, and alarmed lest the beauty of Isabelle should interfere with and impede the favourite plan which he had formed, for bestowing the hand of his daughter Joan upon his cousin of Orleans.

CHAPTER XI.

The Journey.

OCCUPATION and adventure might be said to crowd upon the young Scottishman with the force of a spring-tide ; for he was speedily summoned to the apartment of his Captain, the Lord Crawford, where, to his astonishment, he again beheld the King. After a few words respecting the honour and trust which were about to be reposed in him, he was not relieved merely, but delighted, with hearing that he was selected, with the assistance of four others under his command, one of whom was a guide, to escort the Ladies of Croye to the little Court of their relative, the Bishop of Liege, in the safest and most commodious, and, at the same time, in the most secret manner possible. A scroll was given him, in which were set down directions for his guidance, for the places of halt (generally chosen in obscure villages, solitary monasteries, and situations remote from towns), and for the general precautions which he was to attend to, especially on approaching the frontier of Burgundy. He was sufficiently supplied with instructions what he ought to say and do to sustain the personage of the Maitre d'Hotel of two English ladies of rank, who had been on a pilgrimage to Saint Martin of Tours, and were about to visit the holy city of Cologne, and worship the relics of the sage Eastern Monarchs, who came to adore the nativity of Bethlehem ; for under that character the Ladies of Croye were to journey.

Without having any defined notions of the cause of his delight, Quentin Durward's heart leapt for joy at the idea of approaching thus nearly to the person of the Beauty of the Turret, and in a situation which entitled him to her confidence, since her protection was in so great a degree entrusted to his conduct and courage. He felt no doubt in his own mind that he should be her successful guide through the hazards of her pilgrimage. Youth seldom thinks of dangers, and bred up free, and fearless, and self-confiding, Quentin, in particular, only thought of them to defy them. He longed to be exempted from the restraint of the Royal presence, that he might indulge the secret

glee with which such unexpected tidings filled him, and which prompted him to bursts of delight which would have been totally unfitting for the society of others.

At a few minutes before twelve at midnight, Quentin, according to his directions, proceeded to the second court-yard. He found, at this place of rendezvous, the men and horses appointed to compose the retinue, leading two sumpter mules already loaded with baggage, and holding three palfreys for the two Countesses and a faithful waiting woman, with a stately war-horse for himself, whose steel-plated saddle glanced in the pale moonlight. Not a word of recognition was spoken on either side. The men sat still in their saddles, as if they were motionless. They were only three in number; but one of them whispered to Quentin, in a strong Gascon accent, that their guide was to join them beyond Tours.

Meantime, lights glanced to and fro at the lattices of the tower. At length, a small door was unclosed, and three females came forth, attended by a man wrapped in a cloak. They mounted in silence the palfreys which stood prepared for them, while their attendant on foot led the way, and gave the pass-words and signals to the watchful guards, whose posts they passed in succession. Thus they at length reached the exterior of these formidable barriers. Here the man on foot, who had hitherto acted as their guide, paused, and spoke low and earnestly to the two foremost females.

' May Heaven bless you, Sire,' said a voice which thrilled upon Quentin Durward's ear, ' and forgive you, even if your purposes be more interested than your words express! To be placed in safety under the protection of the good Bishop of Liege is the utmost extent of my desire.'

The person whom she thus addressed muttered an inaudible answer, and retreated back through the barrier-gate, while Quentin thought that, by the moon-glimpse, he recognized in him the King himself, whose anxiety for the departure of his guests had probably induced him to give his presence, in case scruples should arise on their part, or difficulties on that of the guards of the Castle.

When the riders were beyond the Castle, it was necessary for some time to ride with great precaution, in order

to avoid the pitfalls, snares, and similar contrivances, which were placed for the annoyance of strangers. The Gascon was, however, possessed completely of the clue to this labyrinth, and in a quarter of an hour's riding they found themselves beyond the limits of Plessis le Parc, and not far distant from the city of Tours.

Quentin then underwent the interrogatories of the Lady Hameline.

'What was his name, and what his degree?'

He told both.

'Was he perfectly acquainted with the road?'

'He could not,' he replied, 'pretend to much knowledge of the route, but he was furnished with full instructions, and he was, at their first resting-place, to be provided with a guide, in all respects competent to the task of directing their farther journey.'

'And why were you selected for such a duty, young gentleman?' said the lady. 'I am told you are the same youth as was lately upon guard in the gallery in which we met the Princess of France. You seem young and inexperienced for such a charge—a stranger, too, in France, and speaking the language as a foreigner.'

'I am bound to obey the commands of the King, madam,' answered the young soldier.

'Are you of noble birth?' demanded the same querist.

'I may safely affirm so, madam,' replied Quentin.

'And are you not,' said the younger lady, addressing him in her turn, but with a timorous accent, 'the youth whom I saw when I was called to wait upon the King at yonder inn?'

Lowering his voice, perhaps from similar feelings of timidity, Quentin answered in the affirmative.

'Then, I think, cousin,' said the Lady Isabelle, addressing the Lady Hameline, 'we must be safe under this young gentleman's safeguard; he looks not, at least, like one to whom the execution of a plan of treacherous cruelty upon two helpless women could be with safety entrusted.'

'On my honour, madam,' said Durward, 'by the fame of my House, I could not, for France

and Scotland laid into one, be guilty of treachery or cruelty towards you !'

' You speak well, young man,' said the Lady Hameline ; ' but we are accustomed to hear fair speeches from the King of France and his agents. And in what did the promises of the King result ? In an obscure and shameful concealing of us, under plebeian names, as a sort of prohibited wares, in yonder paltry hostelry.'

' I would that had been the sorest evil, dear kinswoman,' said the Lady Isabelle ; ' I could gladly have dispensed with state.'

' But not with society,' said the elder Countess ; ' that, my sweet cousin, was impossible.'

' I would have dispensed with all, my dearest kinswoman,' answered Isabelle, in a voice which penetrated to the very heart of her young conductor and guard—' with all, for a safe and honourable retirement. I wish not—God knows I never wished—to occasion war betwixt France and my native Burgundy, or that lives should be lost for such as I am. I only implored permission to retire to the Convent of Marmoutier, or to any other holy sanctuary.'

' You spoke then like a fool, my cousin,' answered the elder lady, ' and not like a daughter of my noble brother.'

Quentin, with the natural politeness of one who had been gently nurtured, dreading lest his presence might be a restraint on their conversation, rode forward to join the guide, as if to ask him some questions concerning their route.

Meanwhile, the ladies continued their journey in silence, or in such conversation as is not worth narrating, until day began to break ; and as they had been on horseback for several hours, Quentin, anxious lest they should be fatigued, became impatient to know their distance from the nearest resting-place.

' I shall show it you,' answered the guide, ' in half an hour.'

' And then you leave us to other guidance ? ' continued Quentin.

' Even so, Seignior Archer,' replied the man ; ' my journeys are always short and straight. When you and

others, Seignior Archer, go by the bow, I always go by the cord.'

The moon had by this time long been down, and the lights of dawn were beginning to spread bright and strong in the east, so that objects began to be discerned with sufficient accuracy. Quentin cast his eye on the person whom he rode beside, and recognized the facetious features of the same Petit-André, whose fingers, not long since, had been so unpleasantly active about his throat. Impelled by aversion, not altogether unmixed with fear, which his late narrow escape had not diminished, Durward instinctively moved his horse's head to the right, and, pressing him at the same time with the spur, made a demi-volte, which separated him eight feet from his hateful companion.

Here he was disturbed by the cry of both the ladies at once : 'Look back—look back ! For the love of Heaven look to yourself, and us—we are pursued !'

Quentin hastily looked back, and saw that two armed men were in fact following them, and riding at such a pace as must soon bring them up with their party. 'It can,' he said, 'be only some of the Provostry making their rounds in the forest. 'Do you look,' he said to Petit-André, 'and see what they may be.'

Petit-André obeyed ; and rolling himself jocosely in the saddle after he had made his observations, replied : 'These, fair sir, are neither your comrades nor mine—neither Archers nor Marshalinen—for I think they wear helmets, with visors lowered, and gorgets of the same.'

'Do you, gracious ladies,' said Durward, without attending to Petit-André, 'ride forward—not so fast as to raise an opinion of your being in flight, and yet fast enough to avail yourself of the impediment which I shall presently place between you and these men who follow us.'

The Countess Isabelle looked to their guide, and then whispered to her aunt, who spoke to Quentin thus : 'We have confidence in your care, fair Archer, and shall rather abide the risk of whatever may chance in your company, than go onward with that man, whose mien is, we think, of no good augury.'

'Be it as you will, ladies,' said the youth. 'There are but two who come after us; and though they be knights,

as their arms seem to show, they will, if they have any evil purpose, learn how a Scottish gentleman can do his devoir in the presence and for the defence of such as you. Which of you there,' he continued, addressing the guards whom he commanded, 'is willing to be my comrade, and to break a lance with these gallants ?'

While he spoke, the two knights—for they seemed of no less rank—came up with the rear of the party, in which Quentin, with the sturdy Gascon, had by this time stationed himself.

One of them, as they approached, called out to Quentin, 'Sir Squire, give place; we come to relieve you of a charge which is above your rank and condition. You will do well to leave these ladies in our care, who are fitter to wait upon them, especially as we know that in yours they are little better than captives.'

'In return to your demand, sirs,' replied Durward, 'know, in the first place, that I am discharging the duty imposed upon me by my present Sovereign; and next, that, however unworthy I may be, the ladies desire to abide under my protection.'

'Out, sirrah !' exclaimed one of the champions; 'will you, a wandering beggar, put yourself on terms of resistance against belted knights ?'

'They are indeed terms of resistance,' said Quentin, 'since they oppose your insolent and unlawful aggression; and if there be difference of rank between us, which as yet I know not, your courtesy has done it away. Draw your sword, or, if you will use the lance, take ground for your career.'

While the knights turned their horses, and rode back to the distance of about a hundred and fifty yards, Quentin, looking to the ladies, bent low on his saddle-bow, as if desiring their favourable regard, and as they streamed towards him their kerchiefs, in token of encouragement, the two assailants had gained the distance necessary for their charge.

Calling to the Gascon to bear himself like a man, Durward put his steed into motion; and the four horsemen met in full career in the midst of the ground which at first separated them. The shock was fatal to the poor Gascon;

for his adversary, aiming at his face, which was undefended by a visor, ran him through the eye into the brain, so that he fell dead from his horse.

On the other hand, Quentin, though labouring under the same disadvantage, swayed himself in the saddle so dexterously that the hostile lance, slightly scratching his cheek, passed over his right shoulder ; while his own spear, striking his antagonist fair upon the breast, hurled him to the ground. Quentin jumped off, to unhelm his fallen opponent ; but the other knight (who had never yet spoken), seeing the fortune of his companion, dismounted still more speedily than Durward, and bestriding his friend, who lay senseless, exclaimed : ‘In the name of God and Saint Martin, mount, good fellow, and get you gone with your woman’s ware ! They have caused mischief enough this morning.’

‘By your leave, Sir Knight,’ said Quentin, who could not brook the menacing tone in which this advice was given, ‘I shall first see whom I have had to do with, and learn who is to answer for the death of my comrade.’

‘That shall you never live to know or to tell,’ answered the knight. ‘Get you back in peace, good fellow. If we were fools for interrupting your passage, we have had the worst, for you have done more evil than the lives of you and your whole band could repay. Nay, if you will have it’ (for Quentin now drew his sword, and advanced on him), ‘take it with a vengeance !’

So saying, he dealt the Scot such a blow on the helmet as, till that moment (though bred where good blows were plenty), he had only read of in romance. Durward, dizzy, stunned, and beaten down on one knee, was for an instant at the mercy of the knight, had it pleased him to second his blow. But compassion for Quentin’s youth, or admiration of his courage, or a generous love of fair play, made him withhold from taking such advantage ; while Durward, collecting himself, sprang up and attacked his antagonist with the energy of one determined to conquer or die, and at the same time with the presence of mind necessary for fighting the quarrel out to the best advantage. Resolved not again to expose himself to such dreadful blows as he had just sustained, he employed the advantage of superior

agility, to harass his antagonist, by traversing on all sides, with a suddenness of motion and rapidity of attack, against which the knight, in his heavy panoply, found it difficult to defend himself without much fatigue.

It was in vain that this generous antagonist called aloud to Quentin, 'that there now remained no cause of fight betwixt them, and that he was loath to be constrained to do him injury.' Listening only to the suggestions of a passionate wish to redeem the shame of his temporary defeat, Durward continued to assail him with the rapidity of lightning—now menacing him with the edge, now with the point of his sword, and ever keeping such an eye on the motions of his opponent, of whose superior strength he had had terrible proof, that he was ready to spring backward, or aside, from under the blows of his tremendous weapon.

'Now the devil be with you for an obstinate and presumptuous fool,' muttered the knight, 'that cannot be quiet till you are knocked on the head!' So saying he changed his mode of fighting, collected himself as if to stand on the defensive, and seemed contented with parrying, instead of returning, the blows which Quentin unceasingly aimed at him, with the internal resolution that the instant when either loss of breath, or any false or careless pass of the young soldier, should give an opening, he would put an end to the fight by a single blow. It is likely he might have succeeded in this artful policy, but Fate had ordered it otherwise.

The duel was still at its hottest, when a large party of horse rode up, crying, 'Hold, in the King's name!' Both champions stepped back, and Quentin saw, with surprise, that his Captain, Lord Crawford, was at the head of the party who had thus interrupted their combat.

CHAPTER XII.

The Guide.

THE arrival of Lord Crawford and his guard put an immediate end to the engagement which we endeavoured to describe in the last chapter; and the Knight, throwing

off his helmet, hastily gave the old lord his sword, saying, 'Crawford, I render myself. But hither—and lend me your ear—a word, for God's sake—save the Duke of Orleans!'

'How?—what?—the Duke of Orleans!' exclaimed the Scottish commander. 'How came this, in the name of the foul fiend? It will ruin the young man with the King, for ever and a day.'

'Ask no questions,' said Dunois—for it was no other than he—it was all my fault. See, he stirs. I came forth but to have a snatch at yonder damsels, and make myself a landed and a married man—and see what is come on't. Keep back your canaille—let no man look upon him.' So saying, he opened the visor of Orleans, and threw water on his face.

Quentin Durward, meanwhile, stood like one planet-struck; so fast did new adventures pour in upon him. He had now borne to the earth the first Prince of the blood in France, and had measured swords with her best champion, the celebrated Dunois—both of them achievements honourable in themselves; but whether they might be called good service to the King, or so esteemed by him, was a very different question.

The Duke had now recovered his breath, and was able to sit up and give attention to what passed betwixt Dunois and Crawford, while the former pleaded eagerly that there was no occasion to mention in the matter the name of the most noble Orleans, while he was ready to take the whole blame on his own shoulders; and to avouch that the Duke had come thither only in friendship to him.

Lord Crawford continued listening, with his eyes fixed on the ground, and from time to time he sighed and shook his head. At length he said, looking up: 'You know, Dunois, that for your father's sake, as well as your own, I would full fain do you a service.'

'It is not for myself I demand anything,' answered Dunois. 'You have my sword, and I am your prisoner—what needs more? But it is for this noble Prince, the only hope of France, if God should call the Dauphin. He came hither only to do me a favour—in an effort to make my

fortune—in a matter which the King had partly encouraged.'

'Dunois,' replied Crawford, 'if another had told me you had brought the noble Prince into this jeopardy to serve any purpose of your own, I had told him it was false. And now, that you do pretend so thyself, I can hardly believe it is for the sake of speaking the truth.'

'Noble Crawford,' said Orleans, who had now entirely recovered from his swoon, 'you are too like in character to your friend Dunois not to do him justice. It was indeed I that dragged him hither, most unwillingly, upon an enterprise of hare-brained passion, suddenly and rashly undertaken. Look on me all who will,' he added, rising up and turning to the soldiery. 'I am Louis of Orleans, willing to pay the penalty of my own folly. I trust the King will limit his displeasure to me, as is but just. Meanwhile, as a child of France must not give up his sword to any one—not even to you, brave Crawford—fare thee well, good steel.'

So saying, he drew his sword from its scabbard and flung it into the neighbouring lake.

Dunois was the first who spoke, and it was in the chiding tone of an offended and distrusted friend: 'So! your Highness has judged it fit to cast away your best sword, in the same morning when it was your pleasure to fling away the King's favour, and to slight the friendship of Dunois?'

'My dearest kinsman,' said the Duke, 'when or how was it in my purpose to slight your friendship, by telling the truth, when it was due to your safety and my honour?'

'What had you to do with my safety, my most princely cousin, I would pray to know?' answered Dunois gruffly. 'What, in God's name, was it to you, if I had a mind to be hanged. But it would not have stood so hard with me—and so much for my safety. And then for your own honour. Here has your Highness got yourself unhorsed by a wild Scottish boy.'

'Tut, tut!' said Lord Crawford; 'never shame his Highness for that. It is not the first time a Scottish boy has broken a good lance. I am glad the youth has borne him well.'

'I shall say nothing to the contrary,' said Dunois; 'yet had your Lordship come something later than you did, there might have been a vacancy in your band of Archers.'

'Ay, ay,' answered Lord Crawford; 'I can read your handwriting in that cleft morion. Some one take it from the lad, and give him a bonnet, which, with its steel lining, will keep his head better than that broken loom. And let me tell your Lordship that your own armour of proof is not without some marks of good Scottish handwriting. But, Dunois, I must now request the Duke of Orleans and you to take horse and accompany me, as I have power and commission to convey you to a place different from that which my goodwill might assign you.'

Then, addressing Quentin, he added: 'You, young man, have done your duty. Go on to obey the charge with which you are entrusted.'

He was about to go off, when Quentin could hear Dunois whisper to Crawford, 'Do you carry us to Plessis?'

'No, my unhappy and rash friend,' answered Crawford, with a sigh; 'to Loches.'

'To Loches!' The name of a castle, or rather prison, yet more dreaded than Plessis itself: it fell like a deathknell upon the ear of the young Scotchman. He had heard it described as a place destined to the workings of those secret acts of cruelty with which even Louis shamed to pollute the interior of his own residence. It is no wonder that the name of this place of horrors, and the consciousness that he had been partly the means of dispatching thither two such illustrious victims, struck so much sadness into the heart of the young Scot that he rode for some time with his head dejected, his eyes fixed on the ground, and his heart filled with the most painful reflections.

As he was again at the head of the little troop, and pursuing the road which had been pointed out to him, the Lady Hameline had an opportunity to say to him:

'It seems, fair sir, you regret the victory which your gallantry has attained in our behalf?'

There was something in the question which sounded like irony, but Quentin had tact enough to answer simply and with sincerity.

'I can regret nothing that is done in the service of such

ladies as you are; but, I think, had it consisted with your safety, I had rather have fallen by the sword of so good a soldier as Dunois, than have been the means of consigning that renowned knight and his unhappy chief, the Duke of Orleans, to yonder fearful dungeons.'

'It was, then, the Duke of Orleans,' said the elder lady, turning to her niece. 'I thought so, even at the distance from which we beheld the fray. You see, kinswoman, what we might have been, had this sly and avaricious monarch permitted us to be seen at his Court. The first Prince of the blood of France, and the valiant Dunois; this young gentleman did his devoir bravely and well; but, it seems to me, 'tis pity that he did not succumb with honour, since his ill-advised gallantry has stood betwixt us and these princely rescuers.'

The Countess Isabelle replied in a firm and almost a displeased tone.

'Madam,' she said, 'Your speech is ungrateful to our brave defender, to whom we owe more, perhaps, than you are aware of. Had these gentlemen succeeded so far in their rash enterprise as to have defeated our escort, is it not still evident that, on the arrival of the Royal Guard, we must have shared their captivity? For my own part, I give tears for the brave man who has fallen, and I trust,' she continued, more timidly, 'that he who lives will accept my grateful thanks.'

As Quentin turned his face towards her, to return the fitting acknowledgments, she saw the blood which streamed down on one side of his face, and exclaimed, in a tone of deep feeling, 'Holy Virgin, he is wounded! he bleeds! Dismount, sir, and let your wound be bound up.'

In spite of all that Durward could say of the slightness of his hurt, he was compelled to dismount, and to seat himself on a bank, and unhelmet himself, while the ladies of Croye washed the wound, stanched the blood, and bound it with a kerchief of the younger Countess.

In the meantime, whether the good Lady Hameline admired masculine beauty as much as when she was fifteen years younger or whether she thought she had done their young protector less justice than she ought, it is certain that he began to find favour in her eyes,

'My niece,' she said, 'has bestowed on you a kerchief for the binding of your wound; I shall give you one to grace your gallantry, and to encourage you in your further progress in chivalry.'

So saying, she gave him a richly embroidered kerchief of blue and silver, and, pointing to the housing of her palfrey and the plumes in her riding-cap, desired him to observe that the colours were the same.

Quentin now began to entertain some alarm lest he should have passed the place where his guide was to join him.

While he hesitated whether it would be better to send back one of his followers to see whether this might not be the case, he heard the blast of a horn, and, looking in the direction from which the sound came, beheld a horseman riding very fast towards them.

The rider had a swarthy and sunburnt visage, piercing dark eyes, a well-formed mouth and nose, and other features which might have been pronounced handsome, but for the black elf-locks which hung around his face, and the air of wildness and emaciation, which rather seemed to indicate a savage than a civilized man.

'He also is a Bohemian!' said the ladies to each other; 'Holy Mary, will the King again place confidence in these outcasts?'

'I shall question the man, if it be your pleasure,' said Quentin, 'and assure myself of his fidelity as I best may.'

'Are you come hither to seek us?' was his first question.

The stranger nodded.

'And for what purpose?'

'To guide you to the palace of him of Liege.'

'Of the Bishop?'

The Bohemian again nodded.

'What token can you give me that we should yield credence to you?'

'Even the old rhyme, and no other,' answered the Bohemian—

'The page slew the boar,
The peer had the gloire.'

'A true token,' said Quentin; 'lead on, good fellow; I shall speak further with you presently.' Then falling

back to the ladies, he said : 'I am convinced this man is the guide we are to expect, for he has brought me a password known, I think, but to the King and me. But I shall discourse with him further, and endeavour to ascertain how far he is to be trusted.'

CHAPTER XIII.

The Vagrant.

WHILE Quentin held this brief communication with the ladies he noticed that the man not only turned his head as far back as he could to peer at them, but that he had screwed his whole person around on the saddle, so as to sit almost sidelong upon the horse, for the convenience, as it seemed, of watching them more attentively.

Not greatly pleased with this manœuvre, Quentin rode up to the Bohemian, and said to him, 'I think, friend, you will prove but a blind guide, if you look at the tail of your horse rather than his ears.'

'And if I were actually blind,' answered the Bohemian, 'I could not the less guide you through any country in this realm of France, or in those adjoining to it.'

'Yet you are no Frenchman born,' said the Scot.

'I am not,' answered the guide.

'What countryman, then, are you?' demanded Quentin.

'I am of no country,' answered the guide.

'You are then,' said the wondering querist, 'destitute of all that other men are combined by—you have no law, no leader, no settled means of subsistence, no house or home. You have, may Heaven compassionate you, no country—and, may Heaven enlighten and forgive you, you have no God! What is it that remains to you, deprived of government, domestic happiness, and religion?'

'I have liberty,' said the Bohemian. 'I crouch to no one, obey no one, respect no one. I go where I will, live as I can, and die when my day comes.'

'What is your name?' said Durward.

'My proper name is known only to my brethren. The men beyond our tents call me Hayraddin Maugrabin—that is, Hayraddin the African Moor.'

'Can you be faithful?'

'I can—all men can,' said the Bohemian.

'But will you be faithful?'

'Would you believe me the more should I swear it?' answered Maugrabin, with a sneer.

'Your life is in my hand,' said the young Scot.

'Strike, and see whether I fear to die,' answered the Bohemian.

'Will money render you a trusty guide?' demanded Durward.

'If I be not such without it, no,' replied the heathen.

'Then what will bind you?' asked the Scot.

'Kindness,' replied the Bohemian.

'Shall I swear to show you such, if you are true guide to us on this pilgrimage?'

'No,' replied Hayraddin, 'it were extravagant waste of a commodity so rare. To you I am bound already.'

'How!' exclaimed Durward, more surprised than ever.

'Remember the chestnut-trees on the banks of the Cher! The victim whose body you cut down was my brother, Zamet, the Maugrabin.'

'And yet,' said Quentin, 'I find you in correspondence with those very officers by whom your brother was done to death; for it was one of them who directed me where to meet with you—the same, doubtless, as procured yonder ladies your services as a guide.'

'What can we do?' answered Hayraddin gloomily. 'These men deal with us as the sheep-dogs do with the flock; they protect us for a while, drive us hither and thither at their pleasure, and always end by guiding us to the shambles.'

Durward, parting from the guide, fell back to the rest of the retinue, very little satisfied with the character of Hayraddin, and entertaining little confidence in the professions of gratitude which he had personally made to him.

'It is all the better,' said Quentin to himself, his spirit rising with the apprehended difficulties of his situation; 'that lovely young lady shall owe all to me. What one hand—ay, and one head—can do, I think I can boldly count upon. I have the best and fairest cause to bear me well that ever kindled mettle within a brave man's bosom.'

Acting upon this resolution, the attention and activity which Quentin bestowed during the journey had in it something that gave him the appearance of ubiquity. His principal and most favourite post was, of course, by the side of the ladies; who, sensible of his extreme attention to their safety, began to converse with him in almost the tone of familiar friendship, and appeared to take great pleasure in the *naïveté*, yet shrewdness, of his conversation. Yet Quentin did not suffer the fascination of this intercourse to interfere with the vigilant discharge of his duty.

In this way they travelled for more than a week, through bypaths and unfrequented districts, and by circuitous routes, in order to avoid large towns. Their resting-places were chiefly the monasteries, most of which were obliged by the rules of their foundation to receive pilgrims, under which character the ladies travelled, with hospitality. The pretence of weariness was usually employed by the Countesses of Croye as an excuse for retiring instantly to rest, and Quentin, as their Major Domo, arranged all that was necessary betwixt them and their entertainers.

One circumstance gave Quentin peculiar trouble, which was the character and nation of his guide; who, as a heathen, and an infidel vagabond, addicted besides to occult arts, was often looked upon as a very improper guest for the holy resting-places at which the company usually halted.

Upon the tenth or twelfth day of their journey, after they had entered Flanders, and were approaching the town of Nainur, all the efforts of Quentin became inadequate to suppress the consequences of the scandal given by his heathen guide. The scene was a Franciscan convent, and of a strict and reformed order, and the Prior a man who afterwards died in the odour of sanctity. After rather more than the usual scruples the obnoxious Bohemian at length obtained quarters in an out-house inhabited by a lay brother, who acted as gardener. The ladies retired to their apartment, as usual, and the Prior, and who was fond of hearing foreigners tell of their native countries, invited Quentin to a slight monastic refection in his own cell. Finding the Father a man of intelligence, Quentin did not neglect the opportunity of making himself

acquainted with the state of affairs in the country of Liege, of which, during the last two days of their journey, he had heard such reports as made him very apprehensive for the security of his charge during the remainder of their route, nay, even of the Bishop's power to protect them, when they should be safely conducted to his residence. The replies of the Prior were not very consolatory.

'The people of Liege,' he said, 'are privily instigated to their frequent mutinies by men who pretend to have commission to that effect from our most Christian King; whom, however, I hold to deserve that term better than were consistent with his thus disturbing the peace of a neighbouring state. Yet so it is, that his name is freely used by those who uphold and inflame the discontents at Liege. There is, moreover, in the land, a nobleman of good descent, and fame in warlike affairs; but a stumbling-block of offence to the countries of Burgundy and Flanders. His name is William de la Marck.'

'Called William with the Beard,' said the young Scot, 'or the Wild Boar of Ardennes?'

'And rightly so called, my son,' said the Prior; 'because he is as the wild boar of the forest, which "treadeth down with his hoofs and rendeth with his tusks." And he has formed to himself a band of more than a thousand men, all, like himself, contemners of civil and ecclesiastical authority, and holds himself independent of the Duke of Burgundy, and maintains himself and his followers by rapine and wrong.'

'I marvel,' said Quentin, 'that the Duke of Burgundy, does not bait this boar of whose ravages I have already heard so much.'

'Alas! my son,' said the Prior, 'the Duke Charles is now at Peronne, assembling his captains to make war against France; and thus, while Heaven has set discord between the hearts of those great princes, the country is misused by such subordinate oppressors. But it is in evil time that the Duke neglects the cure of these internal gangrenes; for this William de la Marck has of late entertained open communication with Rouslaer and Pavillon, the chiefs of the discontented at Liege, and it

is to be feared he will soon stir them up to some desperate enterprise.'

'But the Bishop of Liege,' said Quentin, 'he has still power enough to subdue this disquieted and turbulent spirit?'

'The Bishop, my child,' replied the Prior, 'has power as a secular prince, and he has the protection of the mighty House of Burgundy; he has also spiritual authority as a prelate, and he supports both with a reasonable force of good soldiers and men-at-arms. This William de la Marck was bred in his household, and bound to him by many benefits. But he gave vent, even in the court of the Bishop, to his fierce and bloodthirsty temper, and was expelled thence for a homicide, committed on one of the Bishop's chief domestics. From thenceforward, being banished from the good Prelate's presence, he has been his constant and unrelenting foe.'

'You consider, then, the situation of the worthy Prelate as being dangerous?' said Quentin, very anxiously.

'Alas! my son,' said the good Franciscan, 'what or who is there in this weary wilderness whom we may not hold as in danger? But Heaven forfend I should speak of the reverend Prelate as one whose peril is imminent. He has much treasure, true counsellors, and brave soldiers; and, moreover, a messenger who passed hither to the eastward yesterday says that the Duke of Burgundy has dispatched upon the Bishop's request a hundred men-at-arms to his assistance. This reinforcement is enough to deal with William de la Marck, on whose name be sorrow! Amen.'

At this crisis their conversation was interrupted by the Sacristan, who, in a voice almost inarticulate with anger, accused the Bohemian of having practised the most abominable arts of delusion among the younger brethren.

The Father Prior listened to these complaints for some time in silence, as struck with mute horror by their enormous atrocity. When the Sacristan had concluded, he rose up, descending to the court of the convent, and ordered the lay brethren, on pain of the worst consequences of spiritual disobedience, to beat Hayraddin out of the sacred precincts with their broom-staves and cart-whips.

This sentence was executed accordingly, in the presence of Quentin Durward, who, however vexed at the occurrence, easily saw that his interference would be of no avail.

The discipline inflicted upon the delinquent, notwithstanding the exhortations of the Superior, was more ludicrous than formidable. The Bohemian ran hither and thither through the court, amongst the clamour of voices, and noise of blows, some of which reached him not, because purposely mis-aimed; others, sincerely designed for his person, were eluded by his activity; and the few that fell upon his back and shoulders he took without either complaint or reply.

During this scene, a suspicion which Durward had entertained formerly, recurred with additional strength. Hayraddin had, that very morning, promised to him more modest and discreet behaviour than he was wont to exhibit, when they rested in a convent on their journey; yet he had broken his engagement, and had been even more offensively obstreperous than usual. Something probably lurked under this; and might it not be probable that he wished to hold some communication, either with his own horde or some one else, and had recourse to this stratagem in order to get himself turned out of the convent?

No sooner did this suspicion dart through Quentin's mind, than he resolved to follow his cudgelled guide, and observe (secretly, if possible) how he disposed of himself. Accordingly, when the Bohemian fled out at the gate of the convent, Quentin followed in pursuit of him.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Espied Spy.

Being fortunately without his cloak and armour, the Scottish mountaineer was at liberty to put forth a speed which, notwithstanding the rate at which the Bohemian ran, was likely soon to bring his pursuer up with him. This was not, however, Quentin's object; for he considered it more essential to watch Hayraddin's motions than to interrupt them. He was the rather led to this by the

steadiness with which the Bohemian directed his course; which seemed to indicate that his career had some certain goal for its object. He never even looked behind him; and consequently Durward was enabled to follow him unobserved. At length the Bohemian attained the side of a little stream, the banks of which were clothed with alders and willows, and Quentin observed that he stood still, and blew a low note on his horn, which was answered by a whistle at some little distance.

With a degree of caution taught him by his sylvan habits, our friend descended into the channel of the little stream, and so crept along, his form concealed by the boughs overhanging the bank, and his steps unheard amid the ripple of the water. In this manner the Scot drew near unperceived, until he distinctly heard the voices of those who were the subject of his observation. Being at this time under the drooping branches of a magnificent weeping willow, which almost swept the surface of the water, he caught hold of one of its boughs, by the assistance of which he raised himself up into the body of the tree, and sat, secure from discovery, among the central branches.

From this situation he could discover that the person with whom Hayraddin was now conversing was one of his own tribe, and, at the same time, he perceived, to his great disappointment, that no approximation could enable him to comprehend their language, which was totally unknown to him. They laughed much; and as Hayraddin made a sign of skipping about, and ended by rubbing his shoulder with his hand, Durward had no doubt that he was relating the story of the bastinading which he had sustained previous to his escape from the convent.

On a sudden, a whistle was again heard in the distance, which was once more answered by a low tone or two of Hayraddin's horn. Presently afterwards, a tall, stout, soldierly-looking man, a strong contrast in point of thews and sinews to the small and slender-limbed Bohemians, made his appearance.

'Donner and blitz!' was his first salutation, in a sort of German-French, which we can only imperfectly imitate, 'why have you kept me dancing in attendance these three nights?'

'I could not see you sooner, Meinherr,' said Hayraddin, very submissively; 'there is a young Scot who watches my least motions. He suspects me already, and, should he find his suspicion confirmed, I were a dead man on the spot, and he would carry back the women into France again.'

'What of it!' said the lanzknecht; 'we are three—we will attack them to-morrow, and carry the women off without going farther. You said the two valets were cowards; you and your comrade may manage them, and the Devil hold me, but I match your Scots wild-cat.'

'You will find that foolhardy,' said Hayraddin; 'for, besides that we ourselves count not much in fighting, this spark hath matched himself with the best knight in France, and come off with honour. I have seen those who saw him press Dunois hard enough.'

'It is but your cowardice that speaks,' said the German soldier.

'I am no more a coward than yourself,' said Hayraddin; 'but my trade is not fighting. If you keep the appointment where it was laid, it is well; if not, I guide them safely to the Bishop's Palace, and William de la Marck may easily possess himself of them there, provided he is half as strong as he pretended a week since.'

'By Heaven!' said the soldier. 'We are as strong and stronger; but we hear of a hundred lances of Burgundy who will be fainer to seek for us than we to seek for them; for the Bishop has a good force on foot—ay, indeed!'

'You must then hold to the ambuscade at the Cross of the Three Kings,' said the Bohemian.

'Ay; you will swear to bring them there; and when they are on their knees before the cross, and down from off their horses, which all men do, except such black heathens as you, we shall make in on them, and they are ours.'

'Ay; but I promised this piece of necessary villainy only on one condition,' said Hayraddin. 'I will not have a hair of the young man's head touched.'

'But, what need you be so curious about the life of this boy, who is neither your blood nor kin?' said the German.

'No matter for that, honest Heinrick; some men have

pleasure in cutting throats, some in keeping them whole. So swear to me that you will spare him life and limb. Swear, and by the Three Kings, as you call them, of Cologne—I know you care for no other oath.'

The soldier took the oath in the manner prescribed, and then declared that he would be in readiness, observing the place was quite convenient, being scarce five miles from their present leaguer.

'The two worthies parted, after each had again pledged himself to keep the rendezvous.

Quentin Durward watched until they were out of sight, and then descended from his place of concealment, his heart throbbing at the narrow escape which he and his fair charge had made—if, indeed, it could yet be achieved—from a deep-laid plan of villainy. Afraid, on his return to the monastery, of stumbling upon Hayraddin, he made a long detour, and was thus enabled to return to his asylum on a different point from that by which he left it.

On the route, he communed earnestly with himself concerning the safest plan to be pursued. He had formed the resolution, when he first heard Hayraddin avow his treachery, to put him to death as soon as the conference broke up, and his companions were at a sufficient distance; but when he heard the Bohemian express so much interest in saving his own life, he felt it would be ungrateful to execute upon him, in its rigour, the punishment his treachery had deserved. He therefore resolved to spare his life, and even, if possible, still to use his services as a guide, under such precautions as should ensure the security of the precious charge.

But whither were they to turn?—the Countesses of Croye could neither obtain shelter in Burgundy, from which they had fled, nor in France, from which they had been in a manner expelled. The violence of Duke Charles in the one country was scarcely more to be feared than the cold and tyrannical policy of King Louis in the other. After deep thought, Durward could form no better or safer plan for their security than that, evading the ambuscade, they should take the road to Liege by the left hand of the Maes, and throw themselves, as the ladies originally

designed, upon the protection of the excellent Bishop. That Prelate's will to protect them could not be doubted, and, if reinforced by this Burgundian party of men-at-arms, he might be considered as having the power.

To sum up this reasoning—for when is a mental argument conducted without some reference to selfish considerations?—Quentin imagined that the death or captivity to which King Louis had, in cold blood, consigned him, set him at liberty from his engagements to the Crown of France; which, therefore, it was his determined purpose to renounce. The Bishop of Liege was likely, he concluded, to need soldiers, and he thought that, by the interposition of his fair friends, who now, especially the elder Countess, treated him with much familiarity, he might get some command, and perhaps might have the charge of conducting the Ladies of Croye to some place more safe than the neighbourhood of Liege.

This point settled, he had next to consider in what degree he was to use the further guidance of the faithless Bohemian. He had renounced his first thought of killing him in the wood, and, if he took another guide, and dismissed him alive, it would be sending the traitor to the camp of William de la Marck, with intelligence of their motions.

At length Durward settled a plan of operation, on which he could the better reckon, as the execution rested entirely upon himself; and, in the cause in which he was engaged, he felt himself capable of everything. Just as his plan was determined, he reached the convent.

Having recommended himself and his helpless companions to the keeping of Providence, Quentin at length retired to rest.

CHAPTER XV.

Palmistry.

By peep of day Quentin Durward had forsaken his little cell, had roused the sleepy grooms, and, with more than his wonted care, seen that everything was prepared for the day's journey. The horses were carefully fed, so as to render them fit for a long day's journey, or, if that should be necessary, for a hasty flight.

Quentin then belted on his sword with the feeling at once of approaching danger, and of stern determination to dare it to the uttermost.

The Prior blessed them as they mounted to depart, and congratulated Quentin on the absence of his heathen guide ; 'For,' said the venerable man, 'better stumble in the path than be upheld by the arm of a thief or robber.'

Quentin was not quite of his opinion ; for, dangerous as he knew the Bohemian to be, he thought he could use his services, and, at the same time, baffle his treasonable purpose, now that he saw clearly to what it tended. But his anxiety upon his subject was soon at an end, for the little cavalcade was not a hundred yards from the monastery and the village before Maugrabin joined it.

We have already observed that a considerable degree of familiarity had begun to establish itself between Quentin and the ladies. The elder Countess treated him like a favoured equal ; and though her niece showed her regard to their protector less freely, yet, under every disadvantage of bashfulness and timidity, Quentin thought he could plainly perceive that his company and conversation were not by any means indifferent to her.

Nothing gives such life and soul to youthful gaiety as the consciousness that it is successfully received ; and Quentin had accordingly, during the former period of their journey, amused his fair charge with the liveliness of his conversation, and the songs and tales of his country. But on this anxious morning, he rode beside the Ladies of Croye without any of his usual attempts to amuse them, and they could not help observing his silence as something remarkable.

'Our young companion has seen a wolf,' said the Lady Hameline, alluding to an ancient superstition, 'and he has lost his tongue in consequence.'

'To say I had tracked a fox were nearer the mark,' thought Quentin, but gave the reply no utterance.

'You know of some pressing and present danger,' continued the Lady Hameline.

'I have read it in his eye for this hour past !' exclaimed the Lady Isabelle, clasping her hands. 'Sacred Virgin, what will become of us ?'

'Nothing, I hope, but what you would desire,' answered Durward. 'And now I am compelled to ask—Gentle ladies, can you trust me?'

'Trust you?' answered the Countess Hameline—'certainly. But why the question? Or how far do you ask our confidence?'

'I, on my part,' said the Countess Isabelle, 'trust you implicitly, and without condition. If you can deceive us, Quentin, I shall no more look for truth, save in Heaven.'

'Gentle lady,' replied Durward, highly gratified, 'you do me but justice. My object is to alter our route, by proceeding directly by the left bank of the Maes to Liege, instead of crossing at Namur. This differs from the order assigned by King Louis, and the instructions given to the guide. But I heard news in the monastery of marauders on the right bank of the Maes, and of the march of Burgundian soldiers to suppress them. Both circumstances alarm me for your safety. Have I your permission so far to deviate from the route of your journey?'

'My ample and full permission,' answered the younger lady.

'Cousin,' said the Lady Hameline, 'I believe with you that the youth means us well; but bethink you—we transgress the instructions of King Louis, so positively iterated.'

'And why should we regard his instructions?' said the Lady Isabelle. 'I am, I thank Heaven for it, no subject of his; and, as a suppliant, he has abused the confidence he induced me to repose in him. I would not dishonour this young gentleman by weighing his word for an instant against the injunctions of yonder crafty and selfish despot.'

'Now, may God bless you for that very word, Lady,' said Quentin joyously; 'and if I deserve not the trust it expresses, tearing with wild horses in this life, and eternal tortures in the next, were e'en too good for my deserts.'

So saying, he spurred his horse, and rejoined the Bohemian.

'Honest Hayraddin,' he said, 'you have travelled with us for ten days, yet have never shown us a specimen of your skill in fortune-telling.'

'You have never asked me for a specimen of my skill,' said the gipsy. 'You are like the rest of the world, contented to ridicule those mysteries which they do not understand.'

'Give me then a present proof of your skill,' said Quentin; and, ungloving his hand, he held it out to the Zingaro.

Hayraddin carefully regarded all the lines which crossed each other on the Scotsman's palm.

'Here is a hand,' said Hayraddin, 'which speaks of toils endured, and dangers encountered. I read in it an early acquaintance with the hilt of the sword; and yet some acquaintance also with the clasps of the mass-book.'

'This of my past life you may have learned elsewhere,' said Quentin; 'tell me something of the future.'

'This line from the hill of Venus,' said the Bohemian, 'argues a certain and large fortune by marriage.'

'Such promises you make to all who ask your advice,' said Quentin; 'they are part of your art.'

'What I tell you is as certain,' said Hayraddin, 'as that you will in a brief space be menaced with mighty danger; which I infer from this bright blood-red line cutting the table-line traversely, and intimating stroke of sword, or other violence, from which you will be saved only by the attachment of a faithful friend.'

'Yourself, ha?' said Quentin, somewhat indignant that the chiromantist should thus practise on his credulity, and endeavour to found a reputation by predicting the consequences of his own treachery.

'My art,' replied the Zingaro, 'tells me nought that concerns myself.'

'In this, then, the seers of my land,' said Quentin, 'excel your boasted knowledge; for their skill teaches them the dangers by which they are themselves beset. I left not my hills without having felt a portion of the double vision with which their inhabitants are gifted; and I shall give you a proof of it, in exchange for your specimen of palmistry. Hayraddin, the danger which threatens me lies on the right bank of the river; I shall avoid it by travelling to Liege on the left bank.'

'If you accomplish your purpose,' was the Bohemian's reply, 'the dangerous crisis will be transferred from your lot to mine.'

'I thought,' said Quentin, 'that you said but now that you could not presage your own fortune?'

'Not in the manner in which I have but now told you yours,' answered Hayraddin; 'but it requires little knowledge of Louis of Valois to presage that he will hang your guide, because your pleasure was to deviate from the road which he recommended.'

'The attaining with safety the purpose of the journey, and ensuring its happy termination,' said Quentin, 'must atone for a deviation from the exact line of the prescribed route.'

'Ay,' replied the Bohemian, 'if you are sure that the King had in his own eye the same termination of the pilgrimage as he insinuated to you.'

'I regard not your foul suspicions,' answered Quentin; 'my duty is plain and peremptory—to convey these ladies in safety to Liege; and I take it on me to think that I best discharge that duty in changing our prescribed route, and keeping the left side of the river Maes.'

'Pilgrims, as they call themselves, destined for Cologne,' said Hayraddin, 'do not usually descend the Maes so low as Liege; and the route of the ladies will be accounted contradictory of their professed destination.'

'If we are challenged on that account,' said Quentin, 'we shall say that alarmis of William de la Marck, on the right side of the river, justify our holding by the left, instead of our intended route.'

'As you will, my good seignior,' replied the Bohemian. 'I am, for my part, equally ready to guide you down the left as down the right side of the Maes. Your excuse to your master you must make out for yourself.'

Quentin, although rather surprised, was at the same time pleased with the ready acquiescence of Hayraddin in their change of route, for he needed his assistance as a guide, and yet had feared that the disconcerting of his intended act of treachery would have driven him to extre-

mity. Besides, to expel the Bohemian from their society would have been the ready mode to bring down William de la Marck, with whom he was in correspondence, upon their intended route; whereas if Hayraddin remained with them, Quentin thought he could manage to prevent the Moor from having any communication with strangers.

Abandoning, therefore, all thoughts of their original route, the little party followed that by the left bank of the broad Maes, so speedily and successfully, that the next day early brought them to the purposed end of their journey. They found that the Bishop of Liege had established his residence in his beautiful Castle of Schonwaldt, about a mile without Liege.

The Ladies of Croye, when announced by Quentin, were reverently ushered into the great hall, where they met with the most cordial reception from the Bishop, who met them there at the head of his little court. The Prelate assured the ladies of such intercession as his interest at the Court of Burgundy might gain for them, and which, he hoped, might be the more effectual, as Campo-Basso stood rather lower than formerly in the Duke's personal favour. He promised them also such protection as it was in his power to afford; but the sigh with which he gave the warrant seemed to allow that his power was more precarious than in words he was willing to admit.

He gallantly conducted the ladies to his sister's apartment; and his Master of the Household entertained Quentin with the hospitality which his master enjoined, while the other personages of the retinue of the Ladies of Croye were committed to the inferior departments.

In this arrangement Quentin could not help remarking, that the presence of the Bohemian, so much objected to in country convents, seemed, in the household of this wealthy, and perhaps we might say worldly prelate, to attract neither objection nor remark.

CHAPTER XVI.

The City.

SEPARATED from the Lady Isabelle Quentin felt a strange vacancy and chillness of the heart, which he had not yet experienced in any of the vicissitudes to which his life had subjected him. No doubt the cessation of the close intimacy betwixt them was the necessary consequence of the Countess having obtained a place of settled residence ; for, under what pretext could she, had she meditated such an impropriety, have had a gallant young squire, such as Quentin, in constant attendance upon her ?

Quentin tried to dispel the sadness which overhung him by dispatching Charlet, one of the valets, with letters to the court of Louis, announcing the arrival of the Ladies of Croye at Liege. At length his natural buoyancy of temper returned, much excited by the title of an old *romaunt* which lay beside him in the window, which set forth,

How the Squire of lowe degree
Loved the King's daughter of Hongarie.

While he was tracing the 'letters blake' of the ditty so congenial to his own situation, Quentin was interrupted by a touch on the shoulder, and, looking up, beheld the Bohemian standing by him.

Hayraddin, never a welcome sight, was odious from his late treachery, and Quentin sternly asked him, why he dared take the freedom to touch a Christian and a gentleman ?

'Simply,' answered the Bohemian, 'because I wished to know if the Christian gentleman had lost his feeling as well as his eyes and ears. I have stood speaking to you these five minutes, and you have stared on that scrap of yellow paper, as if it were a spell to turn you into a statue, and had already wrought half its purpose.'

'Well, what do you want? Speak, and begone !'

'I want what all men want, though few are satisfied with it,' said Hayraddin. 'I want my ten crowns of gold for guiding the ladies hither.'

'With what face dare you ask any guerdon beyond

my sparing your worthless life?' said Durward fiercely; 'you know that it was your purpose to have betrayed them on the road.'

'But I did *not* betray them,' said Hayraddin; 'if I had, I would have asked no guerdon from you or from them, but from him whom their keeping upon the right-hand side of the river might have benefited. The party that I have served is the party who must pay me.'

'Your guerdon perish with you, then, traitor!' said Quentin, telling out the money. 'Get you to the Boar of Ardennes, or to the devil! but keep hereafter out of my sight, lest I send you thither before your time.'

'The Boar of Ardennes!' repeated the Bohemian, 'it was then no vague guess—no general suspicion—which made you insist on changing the road? Can it be—are there really in other lands arts of prophecy more sure than those of our wandering tribes? The willow-tree under which we spoke could tell no tales. But no—no—no—Dolt that I was!—I have it—I have it! I saw you look towards it as you passed it,—that could not indeed speak, but it might hide one who could hear! I shall hold my councils in an open plain henceforth; not a bunch of thistles shall be near me for a Scot to shroud amongst. Ha! ha! the Scot has beat the Zingaro at his own subtle weapons. But know, Quentin Durward, that you have foiled me to the marring of your own fortune. Yes! the fortune I told you of, from the lines on your hand, had been richly accomplished but for your own obstinacy.'

'By Saint Andrew,' said Quentin, 'your impudence makes me laugh in spite of myself. How, or in what, should your successful villainy have been of service to me? I heard, indeed, that you did stipulate to save my life, but in what your betrayal of these ladies could have served me, but by exposing me to death or captivity, is a matter beyond human brains to conjecture.'

'No matter thinking of it, then,' said Hayraddin, 'for I mean still to surprise you with my gratitude. Had you kept back my hire, I should have held that we were quit, and had left you to your own foolish guidance. As it is, I remain your debtor for yonder matter on the banks of the Cher.'

'I fancy I have already taken out the payment in cursing and abusing you,' said Quentin.

'Hard words, or kind ones,' said the Zingaro, 'are but wind, which make no weight in the balance. Had you struck me, indeed, instead of threatening—'

'I am likely enough to take out payment in that way, if you provoke me longer.'

'I would not advise it,' said the Zingaro; 'such payment, made by a rash hand, might exceed the debt, and unhappily leave a balance on your side, which I am not one to forget or forgive. And now farewell, but not for a long space—I go to bid adieu to the Ladies of Croye.'

'You?' said Quentin in astonishment—'you be admitted to the presence of the ladies, and here, where they are in a manner recluses under the protection of the Bishop's sister? It is impossible.'

'Marthon, however, waits to conduct me to their presence,' said the Zingaro, with a sneer; 'and I must pray your forgiveness if I leave you something abruptly.'

He turned as if to depart, but instantly coming back, said, with a tone of deep and serious emphasis: 'I know your hopes—they are daring, yet not vain if I aid them. I know your fears—they should teach prudence, not timidity. Every woman may be won. A count is but a nickname, which will befit Quentin as well as the other nickname of duke befits Charles, or that of king befits Louis.'

Ere Durward could reply, the Bohemian had left the hall; and Quentin thought of visiting the neighbouring city. In a little while he was within the walls of the city of Liege, then one of the richest in Flanders, and of course in the world.

While wandering about Quentin began to observe that he was the object of attention to several groups of substantial-looking burghers, and amongst whom arose a buzz and whisper, which spread from one party to another; while the number of gazers continued to augment rapidly.

At length he now formed the centre of a considerable crowd, which yet yielded before him while he continued to move forward; while those who followed or kept pace with him studiously avoided pressing on him, or impeding

his motions. Yet his situation was too embarrassing to be long endured, without making some attempt to extricate himself, and to obtain some explanation.

Quentin looked around him, and fixing upon a jolly, stout-made, respectable man, whom, by his velvet cloak and gold chain, he concluded to be a burgher of eminence, and perhaps a magistrate, he asked him : ‘Whether he saw anything particular in his appearance to attract public attention in a degree so unusual? or whether it was the ordinary custom of the people of Liege thus to throng around strangers who chanced to visit their city?’

‘Surely not, good seignior,’ answered the burgher ; ‘the Liegeois are neither so idly curious as to practise such a custom, nor is there anything in your dress or appearance, saving that which is most welcome to this city, and which our townsmen are both delighted to see and desirous to honour.’

‘This sounds very polite, worthy sir,’ said Quentin ; ‘but by the Cross of Saint Andrew, I cannot even guess at your meaning.’

‘Your oath, sir,’ answered the merchant of Liege, ‘convinces me that we are right in our conjecture.’

‘By my patron, Saint Quentin !’ said Durward, ‘I am further off from your meaning than ever.’

‘There again now,’ rejoined the Liegeois, looking as he spoke, most provokingly intelligent. ‘It is surely not for us to see that which you, worthy seignior, deem it proper to conceal. But why swear by Saint Quentin, if you would not have me construe your meaning ? We know the good Count of Saint Paul, who lies there at present, wishes well to our cause.’

‘On my life,’ said Quentin, ‘you are under some delusion ; I know nothing of Saint Paul.’

‘Nay, we question you not,’ said the burgher ; ‘although, hark you—I say, hark in your ear—my name is Pavillon.’

‘And what is my business with that, Seignior Pavillon ?’ said Quentin.

‘Nay, nothing ; only I think it might satisfy you that I am trustworthy. Here is my colleague Rouslaer, too.’

Rouslaer advanced, a corpulent dignitary, who, whispering caution to his neighbour, said, in a tone of rebuke :

'You forget, good colleague, the place is too open. The seignior will retire to your house or mine, and then we shall hear more of our good friend and ally, whom we love with all our honest Flemish hearts.'

'I have no news for any of you,' said Quentin impatiently; 'I only desire of you, as men of account and respectability, to disperse this idle crowd, and allow a stranger to leave your town as quietly as he came into it.'

'Nay, then, sir,' said Rouslaer, 'let me ask you roundly, wherefore wear you the badge of your company if you would remain unknown in Liege?'

'What badge?' said Quentin. 'You look like reverend men and grave citizens, yet, on my soul, you are either mad yourselves, or desire to drive me so.'

Said the other burgher, 'Why, who wear bonnets with the Saint Andrew's cross, save the Scottish Archers of King Louis's Guards?'

'And supposing I am an Archer of the Scottish Guard, why should you make a wonder of my wearing the badge of my company?' said Quentin impatiently.

'He has avowed it, he has avowed it!' said Rouslaer and Pavillon, turning to the assembled burghers. 'He has avowed himself an Archer of Louis's Guard—of Louis, the guardian of the liberties of Liege!'

A general shout and cry now arose from the multitude, in which were mingled the various sounds of 'Long live Louis of France! Long live the Scottish Guard! Long live the valiant Archer! Our liberties, our privileges, or death! No imposts! Long live the valiant Boar of Ardennes! Down with Charles of Burgundy!'

Half-stunned by the noise, which began anew in one quarter so soon as it ceased in another, Quentin had yet time to form a conjecture concerning the meaning of the tumult, and a plan for regulating his own conduct.

He had forgotten that, after his skirmish with Orleans and Dunois, one of his comrades had, at Lord Crawford's command, replaced the morion, cloven by the sword of the latter, with one of the steel-lined bonnets which formed a part of the proper and well-known equipment of the Scotch Guards. That an individual of this body, which was always kept very close to Louis's person, should have

appeared in the streets of a city, whose civil discontents had been aggravated by the agents of that King, was naturally enough interpreted by the burghers of Liege into a determination on the part of Louis openly to assist their cause ; and the apparition of an individual archer was magnified into a pledge of immediate and active support from Louis—nay, into an assurance that his auxiliary forces were actually entering the town at one or other of the city-gates.

In this dilemma, Quentin appealed to Rouslaer, who held one arm, and to Pavillon, who had secured the other, and who were conducting him forward at the head of the ovation, of which he had so unexpectedly become the principal object. He intimated that, if just now conducted to the Stadthouse, he might unhappily feel himself under the necessity of communicating to the assembled notables certain matters which he was directed by the King to reserve for the private ears of his excellent gossips, Meinheers Rouslaer and Pavillon of Liege.

It was natural that Pavillon should desire to do the honours of his dwelling to the supposed envoy of Louis, and a halt before his house excited no surprise on the part of the multitude ; who, on the contrary, greeted Meinheer Pavillon with a loud *vivat* as he ushered in his distinguished guest. Quentin speedily laid aside his remarkable bonnet, for the cap of a felt-maker, and flung a cloak over his other apparel. Pavillon then furnished him with a passport to pass the gates of the city, and to return by night or day as should suit his convenience ; and, lastly, committed him to the charge of his daughter, a fair and smiling Flemish lass, with instructions how he was to be disposed off, while he himself hastened back to his colleague, to amuse their friends at the Stadthouse, with the best excuses which they could invent for the disappearance of King Louis's envoy.

The worthy burgess was no sooner gone than his plump daughter, Trudchen, with many a blush, and many a wreathed smile, which suited very prettily with lips like cherries, laughing blue eyes, and a skin transparently pure, escorted the handsome stranger through the pleached alleys of the Sieur Pavillon's garden, down to the water-side,

and there saw him fairly embarked in a boat, which two stout Flemings had got in readiness.

He was landed from the boat within half a mile of the castle, and rewarded his rowers with a guilder, to their great satisfaction. Yet, short as was the space which divided him from Schonwaldt, the castle-bell had tolled for dinner, and Quentin found, moreover, that he had approached the castle on a different side from that of the principal entrance, and that to go round would throw his arrival considerably later. He therefore made straight towards the side that was nearest him, as he discerned that it presented an embattled wall, probably that of a little garden with a postern opening upon the moat, and a skiff moored by the postern, which might serve, he thought, upon summons, to pass him over. As he approached, in hopes to make his entrance this way, the postern opened, a man came out, and, jumping into the boat, made his way to the farther side of the moat. As he came near, Quentin discerned that this person was the Bohemian, who, avoiding him, as was not difficult, held a different path towards Liege, and was presently out of his ken.

Here was new subject for meditation. Had this vagabond heathen been all this while with the Ladies of Croye, and for what purpose should they so far have graced him with their presence? Tormented with this thought, Durward became doubly determined to seek an explanation with them, for the purpose at once of laying bare the treachery of Hayraddin, and announcing to them the perilous state in which their protector, the Bishop, was placed, by the mutinous state of his town of Liege.

As Quentin thus resolved, he entered the castle by the principal gate, and found that part of the family who assembled for dinner in the great hall, were already placed at their meal. A seat at the upper end of the board had, however, been reserved beside the Bishop's domestic chaplain, who welcomed the stranger.

Quentin briefly described the tumult which had been occasioned in the city by his being discovered to belong to the Scottish Archer-guard of Louis, and endeavoured to give a ludicrous turn to the narrative by saying that he

had been with difficulty extricated by a fat burgher of Liege and his pretty daughter.

But the company were too much interested in the story to taste the jest. All operations of the table were suspended while Quentin told his tale ; and when he had ceased, there was a solemn pause, which was only broken by the Major-Domo saying, in a low and melancholy tone, ‘I would to God that we saw those hundred lances of Burgundy !’

CHAPTER XVII.

The Billet.

WHEN the tables were drawn, the Chaplain, who seemed to have taken a sort of attachment to Quentin Durward’s society, led him into an apartment, the windows of which, on one side, projected into the garden ; and as he saw his companion’s eye gaze rather eagerly upon the spot, he proposed to Quentin to go down and take a view of the curious foreign shrubs with which the Bishop had enriched its parterres.

Nothing could have been more agreeable to Quentin than the prospect of a free entrance into the garden, through means of which, according to a chance which had hitherto attended his passion, he hoped to communicate with, or at least obtain sight of, the object of his affection.

It may be well imagined, that in the curious inspection which he now made, at more leisure, of every window or aperture which looked into the garden, those did not escape which were in the immediate neighbourhood of the small door leading to the apartment of the Countesses. But nothing stirred or showed itself, until it was becoming dusky.

Just as he had resolved to depart, and was taking his last turn under the windows which had such attraction for him, he heard above him a slight and cautious sound. As he looked up in joyful surprise, a casement opened—a female hand was seen to drop a billet, which fell into a rosemary bush that grew at the foot of the wall. The precaution used in dropping this letter, prescribed equal

prudence and secrecy in reading it. To snatch up the billet, thrust it into his bosom, and hie to a place of secrecy, was the work of a single minute. He there opened the precious scroll, and blessed, at the same time, the memory of the Monks of Aberbrothick, whose nurture had rendered him capable of deciphering its contents.

The first line contained the injunction, 'Read this in secret,' and the contents were as follows: 'What your eyes have too boldly said, mine have perhaps too rashly understood. But, unjust persecution makes its victims bold, and it were better to throw myself on the gratitude of one than to remain the object of pursuit to many. Fortune had her throne upon a rock; but brave men fear not to climb. If you dare do aught for one that hazards much, you need but pass into this garden at prime to-morrow, wearing in your cap a blue-and-white feather; but expect no further communication. Your stars have, they say, destined you for greatness, and disposed you to gratitude. Farewell—be faithful, prompt, and resolute, and doubt not your fortune.' Within this letter was enclosed a ring with a table diamond, on which were cut, in form of a lozenge, the ancient arms of the House of Croye.

The first feeling of Quentin upon this occasion was unmixed ecstasy—a pride and joy which seemed to raise him to the stars—a determination to do or die, influenced by which he treated with scorn the thousand obstacles that placed themselves betwixt him and the goal of his wishes.

In this mood of rapture, and unable to endure any interruption which might withdraw his mind, were it but for a moment, from so ecstatic a subject of contemplation, Durward betook himself to the chamber which had been assigned him, to read, and to read again and again, the precious billet.

But such high-wrought feelings could not remain long in the same ecstatic tone. A thought pressed upon him, though he repelled it as ungrateful—as even blasphemous—that the frankness of the confession implied less delicacy, on the part of her who made it, than was consistent with the high romantic feeling of adoration with which he had hitherto worshipped the Lady Isabelle.

This scruple was succeeded by another doubt, harder of

digestion. The traitor Hayraddin had been in the apartments of the ladies for the space of four hours, and, considering the hints which he had thrown out, of possessing an influence over the fortunes of Quentin Durward, what should assure him that this train was not of his laying? and if so, was it not probable that such a dissembling villain had set it on foot to conceal some new plan of treachery? This was a matter to be closely looked into, for Quentin felt a repugnance to this individual, and could not bring himself to hope that anything in which he was concerned could ever come to an honourable or happy conclusion.

These various thoughts rolled over Quentin's mind like misty clouds, to dash and obscure the fair landscape which his fancy had at first drawn, and his couch was that night a sleepless one. At the hour of prime—ay, and an hour before it, was he in the castle-garden, where no one now opposed either his entrance or his abode, with a feather of the assigned colour, as distinguished as he could by any means procure in such haste. At length he heard a few notes of the lute, and presently the lattice opened right above the little postern-door, and Isabelle, in maidenly beauty, appeared at the opening, greeted him half-kindly, half-shyly, coloured extremely at the deep and significant reverence with which he returned her courtesy, shut the casement, and disappeared.

The authenticity of the billet was ascertained—it only remained what was to follow; and of this the fair writer had given him no hint. But no immediate danger impended. The Countess was in a strong castle, under the protection of a prince, at once respectable for his secular, and venerable for his ecclesiastical authority. It was sufficient if he kept himself prompt to execute her commands whenever they should be communicated to him. But Fate purposed to call him into action sooner than he was aware of.

It was the fourth night after his arrival at Schonwaldt, when Quentin awoke with a noise still continuing to sound in his ears. He sprang from bed, and looked from the window of his apartment; but it opened into the garden, and on that side all was quiet, though the opening of the

casement made him still more sensible, from the shouts which reached his ears, that the outside of the castle was beleaguered and assaulted, and that by a numerous and determined enemy. Hastily collecting his dress and arms, and putting them on with such a celerity as darkness and surprise permitted, his attention was solicited by a knocking at the door of his chamber. As Quentin did not answer immediately, the door was forced open from without, and Hayraddin Maugrabin entered the apartment.

'The horoscope of your destinies,' he said energetically to Durward, without any further greeting, 'now turns upon the determination of a minute.'

'Caitiff!' said Quentin, in reply, 'there is treachery around us; and where there is treachery, you *must* have a share in it.'

'You are mad,' answered Maugrabin; 'I never betrayed any one but to gain by it, and wherefore should I betray you, by whose safety I can take more advantage than by your destruction? Hearken for a moment. The Liégeois are up—Willain de la Marck with his band leads them. Were there means of resistance, their numbers, and his fury, would overcome them; but there are next to none. If you would save the Countess and your own hopes, follow me.'

'Lead the way,' said Quentin hastily—'in that name, I dare every danger!'

'As I shall manage it,' said the Bohemian, 'there is no danger, if you can but withhold your hand from strife which does not concern you. Follow me, but with caution and patience; subdue your own courage, and confide in my prudence—and my debt of thankfulness is paid, and you have a Countess for your spouse. Follow me.'

'I follow,' said Quentin, drawing his sword; 'but the inmoment in which I detect the least sign of treachery, your head and body are three yards separate!'

Without more conversation, the Bohemian, seeing that Quentin was now fully armed and ready, ran down the stairs before him, and winded hastily through various side-passages, until they gained the little garden. Scarce a light was to be seen on that side, scarce any bustle was to

be heard ; but no sooner had Quentin entered the open space than the noise on the opposite side of the castle became ten times more stunningly audible.

But the interest of the fight, notwithstanding the martial character of Quentin Durward, was indifferent to him in comparison with the fate of Isabelle of Croye, which, he had reason to fear, would be a dreadful one, unless rescued from the power of the dissolute and cruel freebooter, who was now, as it seemed, bursting the gates of the castle. He reconciled himself to the aid of the Bohemian, and followed across the garden.

At the opposite door, which led to the ladies' apartments, upon a low signal made by Hayraddin, appeared two women, muffled in black silk veils. Quentin offered his arm to one of them, who clung to it with trembling eagerness. The Bohemian, who conducted the other female, took the road straight for the postern which opened upon the moat, through the garden wall, close to which the little skiff was drawn up, by means of which Quentin had formerly observed Hayraddin himself retreating from the castle.

As they crossed, the shouts of storm and successful violence seemed to announce that the castle was in the act of being taken ; and so dismal was the sound in Quentin's ears, that he could not help swearing aloud, ' But that my blood is irretrievably devoted to the fulfilment of my present duty, I would back to the wall, take faithful part with the hospitable Bishop, and silence some of those knaves whose throats are full of mutiny and robbery ! '

The lady, whose arm was still folded in his, pressed it lightly as he spoke, as if to make him understand that there was a nearer claim on his chivalry than the defence of Schonwaldt ; while the Bohemian exclaimed, loud enough to be heard, ' Now, that I call right Christian frenzy, which would turn back to fight, when love and fortune both demand that we should fly. On, on—with all the haste you can make. Horses wait us in yonder thicket of willows.'

' There are but two horses,' said Quentin, who saw them in the moonlight.

' All that I could procure without exciting suspicion—and enough, besides,' replied the Bohemian. ' You two

must ride for Tongres ere the way becomes unsafe—Marthon will abide with the women of our horde. Know, she is a daughter of our tribe, and only dwelt among you to serve our purpose as occasion should fall.'

'Marthon!' exclaimed the Countess, looking at the veiled female with a shriek of surprise; 'is not this my kinswoman?'

'Only Marthon,' said Hayraddin. 'Excuse me that little piece of deceit. I dared not carry off *both* the Ladies of Croye from the Wild Boar of Ardennes.'

'Wretch!' said Quentin emphatically; 'but it is not—shall not be too late—I will back to rescue the Lady Hameline.'

'Hameline,' whispered the lady, in a disturbed voice, 'hangs on your arm, to thank you for her rescue.'

'Ha! what! How is this?' said Quentin, extricating himself from her hold. 'Is the Lady Isabelle then left behind? Farewell—farewell.'

As he turned to hasten back to the castle, Hayraddin laid hold of him. 'Nay, hear you—hear you—you run upon your death! What the foul fiend did you wear the colours of the old one for? I shall never trust blue and white silk again. But she has almost as large a dower—has jewels and gold—has pretensions, too, upon the earldom.'

While he spoke thus, panting on in broken sentences, the Bohemian struggled to detain Quentin, who at length laid his hand on his dagger, in order to extricate himself.

'Nay, if that be the case,' said Hayraddin, unloosing his hold, 'go—and the devil go along with you!' And, soon as freed from his hold, the Scot shot back to the castle with the speed of the wind.

Hayraddin then turned round to the Countess Hameline, who had sunk down on the ground, between shame, fear, and disappointment.

'Here has been a mistake,' he said; 'up lady, and come with me. I shall provide you, ere morning comes, a gallanter husband than this smock-faced boy.'

The Lady Hameline was as violent in her passions as she was vain and weak in her understanding. In a crisis like the present, she was entirely incapable of doing aught, save pouring forth unavailing lamentations, and accusing

Hayraddin of being a thief, a base slave, an impostor, a murderer.

'Call me Zingaro,' returned he composedly, 'and you have said all at once.'

'Monster! you said the stars had decreed our union, and caused me to write—oh, wretch that I was!' exclaimed the unhappy lady.

'And so they *had* decreed your union,' said Hayraddin, 'had both parties been willing; but think you the blessed constellations can make any one wed against his will? I was led into error with your accursed Christian gallantries, and fopperies of ribbons and favours—that's all. Up, and follow me; and take notice, I endure neither weeping nor swooning.'

'I will not stir a foot,' said the Countess obstinately.

'But you shall, though!' exclaimed Hayraddin. 'I swear to you, that you have to do with one who would care little to bind you to a tree, and leave you to your fortune!'

'Nay,' said Marthon, interfering, 'by your favour, she shall not be misused. I wear a knife as well as you, and can use it. She is a kind woman, though a fool. And you, madam, rise up and follow us. Here has been a mistake; but it is something to have saved life and limb. There are many in yonder castle would give all the wealth in the world to stand where we do now.'

As Marthon spoke, a clamour, in which the shouts of victory were mingled with screams of terror and despair, was wafted to them from the Castle of Schonwaldt.

'Hear that, lady!' said Hayraddin, 'and be thankful you are not adding your treble pipe to yonder concert. Believe me, I shall care for you honestly, and the stars will keep their words, and find you a good husband.'

Like some wild animal, exhausted and subdued by terror and fatigue, the Countess Hameline yielded herself up to the conduct of her guides, and suffered herself to be passively led whichever way they would.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Sack.

APPROACHING Schonwaldt on the same side from which he had left it, Quentin Durward met several fugitives making for the wood, who naturally avoided him as an enemy, because he came in an opposite direction from that which they had adopted. When he came nearer, he could hear, and partly see, men dropping from the garden-wall into the castle fosse, and others who seemed precipitated from the battlements by the assailants. His courage was not staggered, even for an instant. There was not time to look for the boat, and Quentin threw himself into the moat, near what was called the little gate of the castle. He avoided with difficulty the fatal grasp of more than one sinking wretch, and, swimming to the drawbridge, caught hold of one of the chains which was hanging down, and attained the platform from which the bridge was suspended. As he struggled to make good his footing, a lanzknecht, with his bloody sword in his hand, made towards him, and raised his weapon for a blow, which must have been fatal.

'How now, fellow!' said Quentin, in a tone of authority. 'Is that the way in which you assist a comrade? Give me your hand.'

The soldier in silence, and not without hesitation, reached him his arm, and helped him upon the platform, when without allowing him time for reflection, the Scot continued in the same tone of command: 'To the western tower, if you would be rich—the Priest's treasury is in the western tower.'

These words were echoed on every hand: 'To the western tower—the treasure is in the western tower!' And the stragglers who were within hearing of the cry took, like a herd of raging wolves, the direction opposite to that which Quentin, come life, come death, was determined to pursue.

Bearing himself as if he were one, not of the conquered, but of the victors, he made a way into the garden, and pushed across it with an eager step and throbbing heart,

bold in his determination to succeed, or leave his life in this desperate undertaking. Ere he reached the garden, three men rushed on him, with levelled lances, crying, 'Liege, Liege !'

Putting himself in defence, but without striking, he replied, 'France, France, friend to Liege !'

'*Vivat France !*' cried the burghers of Liege, and passed on. The same signal proved a talisman to avert the weapons of four or five of La Marck's followers, whom he found straggling in the garden, and who set upon him, crying, 'Sanglier !'

In a word, Quentin began to hope that his character as an emissary of King Louis, the private instigator of the insurgents of Liege, and the secret supporter of William de la Marck, might possibly bear him through the horrors of the night.

On reaching the turret, he shuddered when he found the little side-door was now blockaded with more than one dead body. Two of them he dragged hastily aside, and was stepping over the third body, in order to enter the portal, when the supposed dead man laid hand on his cloak, and entreated him to stay and assist him to rise. Quentin was about to use rougher methods than struggling to rid himself of this untimely obstruction, when the fallen man continued to exclaim, 'I am stifled here, in mine own armour ! I am the Syndic Pavillon of Liege ! If you are for us, I shall enrich you—if you are for the other side, I shall protect you; but do not—do not leave me to die the death of a smothered pig !'

In the midst of this scene of blood and confusion, the presence of mind of Quentin suggested to him that this dignitary might have the means of protecting their retreat. He raised him on his feet, and asked him whether he was wounded.

'Not wounded—at least I think not,' answered the burgher; 'but much out of wind.'

'Sit down then on this stone, and recover your breath,' said Quentin; 'I shall return instantly.'

'For whom are you?' said the burgher, still detaining him,

'For France—for France,' answered Quentin, studying to get away.

'What! my lively young Archer?' said the worthy Syndic. 'Nay, if it has been my fate to find a friend in this fearful night, I shall not quit him, I promise you. Go where you will, I follow. Oh, it is a fearful night!'

During this time he was dragging himself on after Quentin, who, aware of the importance of securing the countenance of a person of such influence, slackened his pace to assist him, although cursing in his heart the encumbrance that retarded him.

At the top of the stair was an anteroom, with boxes and trunks, which bore marks of having been rifled.

Bounding from Pavillon, Quentin sprang through a second and a third room, the last of which seemed to be the bedroom of the Ladies of Croye. No living mortal was to be seen in either of them. He called upon the Lady Isabelle's name, at first gently, then more loudly, and then with an accent of despairing emphasis; but no answer was returned. He wrung his hands, tore his hair, and stamped on the earth with desperation. At length, a feeble glimmer of light, which shone through a crevice in the wainscoting of a dark nook in the bedroom, announced some recess or concealment behind the arras. Quentin hastened to examine it. He found there was indeed a concealed door, but it resisted his hurried efforts to open it. Heedless of the personal injury he might sustain, he rushed at the door with his whole force and weight of his body; and such was the impetus of an effort made betwixt hope and despair, that it would have burst much stronger fastenings.

He thus forced his way, almost headlong, into a small oratory, where a female figure, which had been kneeling in agonizing supplication before the holy image, now sank at length on the floor, under the new terrors implied in this approaching tumult. He hastily raised her from the ground, and, joy of joys! it was she whom he sought to save—the Countess Isabelle. He pressed her to his bosom—entreating her to be of good cheer—for that she was now under the protection of one who had heart and hand enough to defend her against armies.

'Durward !' she said, as she at length collected herself, 'is it indeed you?—then there is some hope left. I thought all living and mortal friends had left me to my fate. Do not again abandon me !'

'Never—never !' said Durward. 'Whatever shall happen—whatever danger shall approach, may I forfeit the benefits purchased by yonder blessed sign, if I be not the sharer of your fate until it is again a happy one !'

'Very pathetic and touching, truly,' said a rough, broken voice behind. 'A love affair, I see; and, from my soul I pity the tender creature, as if she were my own Trudchen.'

'You must do more than pity us,' said Quentin, turning towards the speaker; 'you must assist in protecting us, Meinheer Pavillon. Be assured this lady was put under my especial charge by your ally the King of France; and, if you aid me not to shelter her, your city will lose the favour of Louis of Valois. Above all, she must be guarded from the hands of William de la Marck.'

'That will be difficult,' said Pavillon, 'but I'll do my best.'

The same warmth of temper, which rendered Hermann Pavillon a hotheaded zealot in politics, had the more desirable consequence of making him, in private, a good-tempered, kind-hearted man who, if sometimes a little misled by vanity, was always well-meaning and benevolent. He began to halloo from the window, 'Liege, Liege, for the gallant skinners' guild of curriers !'

One or two of his immediate followers collected at the summons, and, more joining them, established a guard under the window from which their leader was bawling.

Matters seemed now settling into some sort of tranquillity. All opposition had ceased, and the leaders of the different classes of assailants were taking measures to prevent indiscriminate plunder. It would have been natural that Meinheer Pavillon should now have sallied from his fastness; but, either in reverent care of those whom he had taken under his protection, or perhaps for the better assurance of his own safety, he contented himself with dispatching messenger on messenger, to command his lieutenant, Peterkin Geislaer, to attend him directly.

Peterkin came at length, to his great relief, as being the person upon whom, on all pressing occasions, whether of war, politics, or commerce, Pavillon was most accustomed to repose confidence.

'Peter,' said Pavillon, 'we shall go presently to the city. I shall stay no longer in Schonwaldt.'

'But the bridges of this castle are up, master,' said Geislaer, 'the gates locked, and guarded; and, if we were to try to force our way, these fellows, whose everyday business is war, might make wild work of us.'

'But why has he secured the gates?' said the alarmed burgher; 'or what business has he to make honest men prisoners?'

'I cannot tell—not I,' said Peter. 'Some noise there is about the Ladies of Croye, who have escaped during the storm of the Castle. That first put the Man with the Beard beside himself with anger, and now he's beside himself with drink also.'

The Burgomaster cast a disconsolate look towards Quentin, and seemed at a loss what to resolve upon. Durward, who had not lost a word of the conversation, which alarmed him very much, saw nevertheless that their only safety depended on his preserving his own presence of mind, and sustaining the courage of Pavillon. He struck boldly into the conversation, as one who had a right to have a voice in the deliberation. 'I am ashamed,' he said, 'Meinheer Pavillon, to observe you hesitate what to do on this occasion. Go boldly to William de la Marck, and demand free leave to quit the castle, you, your lieutenant, your squire, and your daughter. He can have no pretence for keeping you prisoner.'

'For me and my lieutenant—that is myself and Peter?—good—but who is my squire?'

'I am, for the present,' replied the undaunted Scot.

'You!' said the embarrassed burgess; 'but are you not the envoy of King Louis of France?'

'True, but my message is to the magistrates of Liege—and only in Liege will I deliver it. Were I to acknowledge my quality before William de la Marck, must I not enter into negotiation with him? ay, and, it is like, be detained

by him. You must get me secretly out of the castle in the capacity of your squire.'

'Good—my squire; but you spoke of my daughter—my daughter is, I trust, safe in my house in Liege—where I wish her father was, with all my heart and soul.'

'This lady,' said Durward, 'will call you father while we are in this place.'

'And for my whole life afterwards,' said the Countess, throwing herself at the citizen's feet, and clasping his knees. 'Never shall the day pass in which I shall not honour you, love you, and pray for you as a daughter for a father, if you will but aid me. Oh, be not hard-hearted? Think your own daughter may kneel to a stranger, to ask him for life and honour—think of this, and give me the protection you would wish *her* to receive!'

'In truth,' said the good citizen, much moved with her pathetic appeal, 'I think, Peter, that this pretty maiden has a touch of our Trudchen's sweet look—I thought so from the first; and that this brisk youth here is somewhat like Trudchen's bachelor. I wager a groat, Peter, that this is a true love matter, and it is a sin not to further it.'

'It were shame and sin both,' said Peter, a good-natured Fleming, notwithstanding all his self-conceit; and as he spoke, he wiped his eyes with the sleeve of his jerkin.

'She *shall* be my daughter, then,' said Pavillon, 'well wrapped up in her black silk veil. But hark you—questions must be answered. How if I am asked what should my daughter make here at such an onslaught?'

'What should half the women in Liege make here when they followed us to the castle?' said Peter; 'they had no other reason, sure, but that it was just the place in the world that they should *not* have come to.'

'Admirably spoken,' said Quentin: 'only be bold, and take this gentleman's good counsel, noble Meinheer Pavillon. Here, sweet lady, wrap yourself close in this veil, be but confident, and a few minutes will place you in freedom and safety. Noble sir,' he added, addressing Pavillon, 'set forward.'

As they crossed the courts, Quentin, while he supported Isabelle through the scene of horrors, whispered to her

courage and comfort, and reminded her that her safety depended entirely on her firmness and presence of mind.

'Not on mine—not on mine,' she said, 'but on yours—on yours only. Oh, if I but escape this fearful night, never shall I forget him who saved me! One favour more only, let me implore at your hand, and I conjure you to grant it, by your mother's fame and your father's honour!'

'What is it you can ask that I could refuse?' said Quentin, in a whisper.

'Plunge your dagger in my heart,' said she, 'rather than leave me captive in the hands of these monsters.'

Quentin's only answer was a pressure of the young Countess's hand, which seemed as if, but for terror, it would have returned the caress. And, leaning on her youthful protector, she entered the fearful hall, preceded by Pavillon and his lieutenant, and followed by a dozen of the skinners' trade, who attended, as a guard of honour, on the Syndic.

As they approached the hall, the yells of acclamation, and bursts of wild laughter, which proceeded from it, seemed rather to announce the revel of festive demons, rejoicing after some accomplished triumph over the human race, than of mortal beings, who had succeeded in a bold design. An emphatic tone of mind, which despair alone could have inspired, supported the assumed courage of the Countess Isabelle; undaunted spirits, which rose with the extremity, maintained that of Durward; while Pavillon and his lieutenant made a virtue of necessity, and faced their fate like bears bound to a stake, which must necessarily stand the dangers of the course.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Revellers.

THERE could hardly exist a more strange and horrible change than had taken place in the castle-hall of Schonwaldt since Quentin had partaken of the noontide meal there; and it was indeed one which painted, in the extremity of their dreadful features, the miseries of war. .

At the head of the table sat, in the Bishop's throne and

state, which had been hastily brought thither from his great council-chamber, the redoubted Boar of Ardennes himself, well deserving that dreaded name, in which he affected to delight, and which he did as much as he could think of to deserve.

When the Syndic Pavillon was announced from mouth to mouth in this tumultuous meeting, he endeavoured to assume, in right of his authority and influence, an air of importance and equality, which the wild scene around him rendered it very difficult for him to sustain, notwithstanding the exhortations of Peter, who whispered in his ear, with some perturbation, ‘Up heart, master, or we are but gone men !’

The Syndic maintained his dignity, however, as well as he could, in a short address, in which he complimented the company upon the great victory gained by the soldiers of De la Marck and the good citizens of Liege.

‘Ay,’ answered De la Marck sarcastically, ‘we have brought down the game at last. But ho ! Sir Burgomaster, you come like Mars, with Beauty by your side. Who is this fair one ? Unveil, unveil—no woman calls her beauty her own to-night.’

‘It is my daughter, noble leader,’ answered Pavillon ; ‘and I am to pray your forgiveness for her wearing a veil. She has a vow for that effect to the Three Blessed Kings.’

‘I shall absolve her of it presently,’ said De la Marck ; ‘for here, with one stroke of a cleaver, shall I consecrate myself Bishop of Liege ; and I trust one living bishop is worth three dead kings.’

There was a shuddering and murmur among the guests ; for the community of Liege, and even some of the rude soldiers, reverenced the Kings of Cologne, as they were commonly called, though they respected nothing else.

‘Nay, I mean no treason against their defunct majesties,’ said De la Marck ; ‘only bishop I am determined to be. But come hither, noble Burgomaster—sit beside me, when you will see me make a vacancy for my own preferment. Bring in our predecessor in the holy seat.’

A bustle took place in the hall, while Pavillon, excusing himself from the proffered seat of honour, placed himself near the bottom of the table, his followers keeping close

behind him. Near the spot sat a very handsome lad, a natural son, as was said, of the ferocious De la Marck, and towards whom he sometimes showed affection, and even tenderness. Quentin, who had learned this point of the leader's character from the old priest, planted himself as close as he could to the youth in question ; determined to make him, in some way or other, either a hostage or a protector, should other means of safety fail them.

While all stood in a kind of suspense, the Bishop of Liege, Louis of Bourbon, was dragged into the hall of his own palace by the brutal soldiery. The dishevelled state of his hair, beard, and attire, bore witness to the ill treatment he had already received. By good fortune the Countess Isabelle, whose feelings at seeing her protector in such an extremity might have betrayed her own secret and compromised her safety, was so situated as neither to hear nor see what was about to take place ; and Durward sedulously interposed his own person before her, so as to keep her from observing alike, and from observation.

The scene which followed was short and fearful. When the unhappy Prelate was brought before the footstool of the savage leader, although in former life only remarkable for his easy and good-natured temper, he showed in this extremity a sense of his dignity and noble blood, well becoming the high race from which he was descended. His look was composed and undismayed ; his gesture, when the rude hands which dragged him forward were unloosed, was noble, and at the same time resigned ; and so much was even De la Marck himself staggered by the firm demeanour of his prisoner, and recollection of the early benefits he had received from him, that he seemed irresolute, and it was not until he had emptied a large goblet of wine that, resuming his haughty insolence of look and manner, he thus addressed his unfortunate captive : 'Louis of Bourbon,' said the truculent soldier, drawing hard his breath, clenching his hands, setting his teeth, and using the other mechanical actions to rouse up and sustain his native ferocity of temper, 'I sought your friendship, and

you rejected mine. What would you now give that it had been otherwise? Nikkel, be ready.'

The butcher rose, seized his weapon, and, stealing round behind De la Marck's chair, stood with it uplifted in his bare and sinewy arms.

'Look at that man, Louis of Bourbon,' said De la Marck again. 'What terms will you now offer to escape this dangerous hour?'

The Bishop cast a melancholy but unshaken look upon the grisly satellite, who seemed prepared to execute the will of the tyrant, and then he said with firmness: 'Hear me, William de la Marck; and good men all, if there be any here who deserve that name, hear the only terms I can offer to this ruffian. William de la Marck, you have stirred up to sedition an imperial city—assaulted and taken the palace of a Prince of the Holy German Empire—slain his people—plundered his goods—maltreated his person; for this you are liable to the ban of the Empire—have deserved to be declared outlawed and fugitive, landless and rightless. You have done more than all this. More than mere human laws have you broken—more than mere human vengeance have you deserved. You have broken into the sanctuary of the Lord—laid violent hands upon a Father of the Church—defiled the house of God with blood and rapine, like a sacrilegious robber—'

'Have you yet done?' said De la Marck, fiercely interrupting him, and stamping with his foot.

'No,' answered the Prelate, 'for I have not yet told you the terms which you demanded to hear from me.'

'Go on,' said De la Marck; 'and let the terms please me better than the preface, or woe to your gray head!'

'Such are your crimes,' resumed the Bishop, with calm determination; 'now hear the terms, which, as a merciful Prince and a Christian Prelate, setting aside all personal offence, forgiving each peculiar injury, I condescend to offer. Fling down your leading-staff—renounce your command—unbind your prisoners—restore your spoil—distribute what else you have of goods, to relieve those whom you have made orphans and widows—array yourself in sackcloth and ashes—take a palmer's staff in your hand, and go barefooted on pilgrimage to Rome, and we shall

ourselves be intercessors for you with the Imperial Chamber at Ratisbon for your life, with our Holy Father the Pope for your miserable soul.'

While Louis of Bourbon proposed these terms, in a tone as decided as if he still occupied his episcopal throne, the tyrant slowly raised himself in his chair, the amazement with which he was at first filled giving way gradually to rage, until, as the Bishop ceased, he looked to Nikkel Blok, and raised his finger, without speaking a word. The ruffian struck, as if he had been doing his office in the common shambles, and the murdered Bishop sank, without a groan, at the foot of his own episcopal throne. The Liegeois, who were not prepared for so horrible a catastrophe, and who had expected to hear the conference end in some terms of accommodation, started up unanimously, with cries of execration, mingled with shouts of vengeance.

But William de la Marck, raising his tremendous voice above the tumult, and shaking his clenched hand and extended arm, shouted aloud : 'How now, you porkers of Liege ! Do you dare to mate yourselves with the Wild Boar of Ardennes ? Up, you Boar's brood ! let these Flenish hogs see your tusks !'

Every one of his followers started up at the command, and, mingled as they were among their late allies, prepared too for such a surprisal, each had, in an instant, his next neighbour by the collar, while his right hand brandished a broad dagger, which glimmered against lamp-light and moonshine. Every arm was uplifted, but no one struck ; for the victims were too much surprised for resistance, and it was probably the object of De la Marck only to impose terror on his civic confederates.

But the courage of Quentin Durward gave a new turn to the scene. Imitating the action of the followers of De la Marck, he sprang on Carl Eberson, the son of their leader, and, mastering him with ease, held his dirk at the boy's throat, while he exclaimed : 'Is that your game ? then here I play my part.'

'Hold ! hold !' exclaimed De la Marck, 'it is a jest—a jest. Think you I would injure my good friends and allies of the city of Liege ? Soldiers, unloose your holds ;

sit down ; and let us drown unkindness in a fresh carouse.'

All unloosened their holds, and the citizens and soldiers stood gazing on each other, as if they scarce knew whether they were friends or foes. Quentin Durward took advantage of the moment.

'Hear me,' he said, 'William de la Marck, and you, burghers and citizens of Liege ; and do you, young sir, stand still' (for the boy Carl was attempting to escape from his grip), 'no harm shall befall you, unless another of these sharp jests shall pass round.'

'Who are you, in the fiend's name,' said the astonished De la Marck, 'who are come to hold terms and take hostages from us in our own lair—from us, who exact pledges from others, but yield them to no one ?'

'I am a servant of King Louis of France,' said Quentin boldly ; 'an Archer of the Scottish Guard. I am here to behold and to report your proceedings ; and I see with wonder that they are those of heathens rather than Christians. The hosts of Charles of Burgundy will be instantly in motion against you all ; and if you wish assistance from France, you must conduct yourselves in a different manner. For you, men of Liege, I advise your instant return to your own city ; and if there is any obstruction offered to your departure, I denounce those by whom it is so offered, foes to my master, his most gracious Majesty of France.'

'France and Liege ! France and Liege !' cried the followers of Pavillon, and several other citizens, whose courage began to rise at the bold language held by Quentin.

William de la Marck's eyes sparkled, and he grasped his dagger as if about to launch it at the heart of the audacious speaker ; but, glancing his eye around, he read something in the looks of his soldiers which even *he* was obliged to respect. Many of them were Frenchmen, and all of them knew the private support which William had received from that kingdom ; nay, some of them were rather startled at the violent and sacrilegious action which had been just committed. The name of Charles of Burgundy had an alarming sound, and the extreme impolicy of at once quarrelling with the Liegeois and provoking the Monarch of France, made an appalling impression on their minds, con-

fused as their intellects were. De la Marck, in short, saw he would not be supported, even by his own band, in any further act of immediate violence, and, relaxing the terrors of his brow and eye, declared that 'he had not the least design against his good friends of Liege, all of whom were at liberty to depart from Schonwaldt at their pleasure. Meantime, he trusted that the Scottish gentleman would honour his feast by remaining all night at Schonwaldt.'

The young Scot returned his thanks, but said his motions must be determined by those of Pavillon, to whom he was directed particularly to attach himself ; but that, unquestionably, he would attend him on his next return to the quarters of the valiant William de la Marck.

'If you depend on my motions,' said Pavillon hastily and aloud, 'you are likely to quit Schonwaldt without an instant's delay ; and if you do not come back to Schonwaldt, save in my company, you are not likely to see it again in a hurry.'

Most of the better classes of the Liegeois seemed to entertain similar opinions with the Syndic, and there had been scarce so much joy amongst them at the obtaining possession of Schonwaldt as now seemed to arise from the prospect of getting safe out of it. They were suffered to leave the castle without opposition of any kind ; and glad was Quentin when he turned his back on those formidable walls.

For the first time since they had entered that dreadful hall, Quentin ventured to ask the young Countess how she did.

'Well, well,' she answered, in feverish haste, 'excellently well. Do not stop to ask a question ; let us not lose an instant in words. Let us fly—let us fly !'

She endeavoured to mend her pace as she spoke ; but with so little success that she must have fallen from exhaustion, had not Durward supported her. With the tenderness of a mother the young Scot raised his precious charge in his arms ; and, while she encircled his neck with one arm, lost to every other thought save the desire of escaping, he would not have wished one of the risks of the night unencountered, since such had been the conclusion.

The honest Burgomaster was, in his turn, supported and dragged forward by his faithful counsellor Peter, and another of his clerks ; and thus, in breathless haste, they reached the banks of the river, encountering many strolling bands of citizens, who were eager to know the event of the siege, and the truth of certain rumours already afloat, that the conquerors had quarrelled among themselves.

Evading their curiosity as they best could, the exertions of Peter and some of his companions at length procured a boat for the use of the company, and with it an opportunity of enjoying some repose, equally welcome to Isabelle, who continued to lie almost motionless in the arms of her preserver, and to the worthy Burgomaster.

But when the boat stopped at the bottom of his garden, and he had got himself assisted on shore by Peter, the touch of his own threshold converted the discontented and obscure demagogue into the honest, kind, hospitable, and friendly host. He called loudly for Trudchen, who presently appeared ; for fear and anxiety would permit few within the walls of Liege to sleep during that eventful night. She was charged to pay the utmost attention to the care of the beautiful and half-fainting stranger ; and, admiring her personal charms, while she pitied her distress, Gertrude discharged the hospitable duty with the zeal and affection of a sister.

CHAPTER XX.

The Flight.

IN spite of a mixture of joy and fear, doubt, anxiety, and other agitating passions, the exhausting fatigues of the preceding day were powerful enough to throw the young Scot into a deep and profound repose, which lasted until late on the day following ; when his worthy host entered the apartment.

'Has the Lady Isabelle left her apartment ?' said the youth.

'Yes,' replied Pavillon ; 'and she expects your approach with much impatience, to determine which way you will go. But I trust you will tarry breakfast ?'

'Why did you not tell me this sooner?' said Durward impatiently.

'Softly—softly,' said the Syndic; 'I have told it you too soon, I think, if it puts you into such a hasty fluster. Now I have some more matter for your ear, if I saw you had some patience to listen to me.'

'Speak it, worthy sir, as soon and as fast as you can; I listen devoutly.'

'Well, then,' resumed the Burgomaster, 'I have but one word to say, and that is, that Trudchen wants you to take some other disguise; for there is word in the town that the Ladies of Croye travel the country in pilgrim's dresses, attended by a French life-guardsman of the Scottish Archers; and it is said one of them was brought into Schonwaldt last night by a Bohemian after we had left it; and it was said still further that this same Bohemian had assured William de la Marck that you were charged with no message either to him or to the good people of Liege, and that you had stolen away the young Countess. And all this news has come from Schonwaldt this morning.'

'Your daughter advises well,' said Quentin Durward. We must part in disguise, and that instantly. We may, I trust, rely upon you for the necessary secrecy, and for the means of escape?'

'With all my heart—with all my heart,' said the honest citizen.

The wealthy Fleming then conveyed his guest to the parlour, where, in full possession of her activity of mind and body, though pale from the scenes of the preceding night, he found the Countess attired in the fashion of a Flemish maiden of the middling class. No other was present excepting Trudchen, who was sedulously employed in completing the Countess's dress, and instructing her how to bear herself. She extended her hand to him, which, when he had reverently kissed, she said to him: 'Seignior Quentin, we must leave our friends here, unless I would bring on them a part of the misery which has pursued me ever since my father's death. You must change your dress and go with me, unless you also are tired of befriending a being so unfortunate.'

'I!—I tired of being your attendant! To the end of the earth will I guard you!'

'Get yourself in readiness hastily, Seignior Durward,' said Isabelle, 'since to your faith I must needs commit myself.'

No sooner had the Syndic and Quentin left the room, than Isabelle began to ask of Gertrude various questions concerning the road, and so forth, with such clearness of spirit and pertinence, that the latter could not help exclaiming: 'Lady, I wonder at you! I have heard of masculine firmness, but yours appears to me more than belongs to humanity.'

To kiss her tenderly was the only way in which the young Countess could express her thanks to the frank and kind-hearted city-maiden, who returned the embrace affectionately, and added, with a smile, 'Nay, if two maidens and their devoted bachelors cannot succeed in a disguise and an escape, the world is changed from what I am told it was wont to be.'

A part of this speech called the colour into the Countess's pale cheeks, which was not lessened by Quentin's sudden appearance. He entered completely attired as a Flemish boor of the better class. Two stout horses had been provided by the activity of Mother Mabel, who really desired the Countess and her attendant no harm, so that she could make her own house and family clear of the dangers which might attend upon harbouring them. She beheld them mount and go off with great satisfaction, after telling them that they would find their way to the east gate by keeping their eye on Peter, who was to walk in that direction as their guide, but without holding any visible communication with them.

They passed the guards in virtue of a permission obtained for them by Pavillon, but in the name of his colleague Rouslaer, and they took leave of Peter Geislaer with a friendly though brief exchange of good wishes on either side. Immediately afterwards, they were joined by a stout young man, riding a good gray horse, who presently made himself known as Hans Glover, the bachelor of Trudchen Pavillon. He was a young fellow with a good

Flemish countenance—not, indeed, of the most intellectual cast, but arguing more hilarity and good humour than wit, and, as the Countess could not help thinking, scarce worthy to be bachelor to the generous Trudchen. He seemed, however, fully desirous to second the views which she had formed in their favour; for, saluting them respectfully, he asked of the Countess in Flemish, on which road she desired to be conducted?

'Guide me,' said she, 'towards the nearest town on the frontiers of Brabant.'

'You have then settled the end and object of your journey?' said Quentin, approaching his horse to that of Isabelle.

'Surely,' replied the young lady; 'for, situated as I now am, it must be of no small detriment to me if I were to prolong a journey in my present circumstances.'

'And why not rather betake yourself to your own strong castle, as you designed when at Tours?' said Quentin. 'Why not call around you the vassals of your father, and make treaty with Burgundy, rather than surrender yourself to him? Surely there must be many a bold heart that would fight in your cause; and I know at least of one who would willingly lay down his life to give example.'

'Alas!' said the Countess, 'that scheme has become impracticable, since it was betrayed to Burgundy by the double traitor Zainet Maugrabin. Any attempt of mine would but expose my dependants to the vengeance of Duke Charles; and why should I occasion more bloodshed than has already taken place on so worthless an account? No, I shall submit myself to my Sovereign as a dutiful vassal, in all which will leave my personal freedom of choice uninfringed; the rather that I trust my kinswoman, the Countess Hameline, who first counselled, and indeed urged my flight, has already taken this wise and honourable step!'

'Your kinswoman!' repeated Quentin, awakened to recollections to which the young Countess was a stranger, and which the rapid succession of perilous and stirring events had, as matters of nearer concern, in fact banished from his memory.

'Ay—my aunt—the Countess Hameline of Croye—know you aught of her?' said the Countess Isabelle. 'I trust she is now under the protection of the Burgundian banner. You are silent! Know you aught of her?'

The last question, urged in a tone of the most anxious inquiry, obliged Quentin to give some account of what he knew of the Countess's fate. He mentioned that he had been summoned to attend her in a flight from Liege, which he had no doubt that Lady Isabelle would be partaker in; he mentioned the discovery that had been made after they had gained the forest; and finally, he told of his own return to the castle, and the circumstances in which he found it. But he said nothing of the views with which it was plain the Lady Hameline had left the Castle of Schonwaldt, and as little about the floating report of her having fallen into the hands of William de la Marck. Delicacy prevented his even hinting at the one, and regard for the feelings of his companion prevented him from alluding to the latter, which had, besides, only reached him as a mere rumour.

Meantime, the artificial distinction which divided the two lovers (for such we may now term them), seemed dissolved, or removed, by the circumstances in which they were placed; for if the Countess boasted the higher rank, and was by birth entitled to a fortune incalculably larger than that of the youth, whose revenue lay in his sword, it was to be considered that, for the present, she was as poor as he, and for her safety, honour, and life, exclusively indebted to his presence of mind, valour, and devotion. They *spoke* not indeed of love, for though the young lady, her heart full of gratitude and confidence, might have pardoned such a declaration, yet Quentin would have held it an unworthy abuse of her situation had he said anything which could have the appearance of taking undue advantage of the opportunities which it afforded them. They *spoke* not then of love, but the thoughts of it were on both sides unavoidable; and thus they were placed in that relation to each other in which sentiments of mutual regard are rather understood than announced, and which often forms the most delightful hours of human existence.

It was two hours after noon, when the travellers were alarmed by the report of the guide, who, with paleness and horror in his countenance, said that they were pursued.

On looking back, and discovering along the long level road which they had traversed a cloud of dust advancing, with one or two of the headmost troopers riding furiously in front of it, Quentin addressed his companion : 'Dearest Isabelle, I have no weapon left save my sword ; but since I cannot fight for you, I will fly with you. Could we gain yonder wood that is before us ere they come up, we may easily find means to escape.'

'So be it, my only friend,' said Isabelle, pressing her horse to the gallop ; 'and you, good fellow,' she added, addressing Hans Glover, 'get you off to another road, and do not stay to partake our misfortune and danger.'

The honest Fleming shook his head, and answered her generous exhortation with *Nein, nein ! das gcht nichts*,¹ and continued to attend them, all three riding towards the shelter of the wood as fast as their jaded horses could go, pursued, at the same time, by the Schwarz-reiters, who increased their pace when they saw them fly. But notwithstanding the fatigue of the horses, still the fugitives, being unarmed, and riding lighter in consequence, had considerably the advantage of the pursuers, and were within about a quarter of a mile of the wood, when a body of men-at-arms, under a knight's pennon, was discovered advancing from the cover, so as to intercept their flight.

'They have bright armour,' said Isabelle ; 'they must be Burgundians. Be they who they will, we must yield to them, rather than to the lawless miscreants who pursue us.'

A moment after, she exclaimed, looking on the pennon : 'I know the cloven heart which it displays ! It is the banner of the Count of Crèvecœur, a noble Burgundian—to him I shall surrender myself !'

Quentin Durward sighed ; but what other alternative remained ? They soon joined the band of Crèvecœur, and the Countess demanded to speak to the leader, who

¹ 'No, no ! that must not be.'

had halted his party till he should reconnoitre the Black Troopers ; and as he gazed on her with doubt and uncertainty, she said : ‘ Noble Count, Isabelle of Croye, the daughter of your old companion in arms, Count Reinold of Croye, renders herself, and asks protection from your valour for her and hers.’

‘ You shall have it, fair kinswoman, were it against a host. But there is little time to talk of it. The filthy-looking fiends have made a halt, as if they intended to dispute the matter. By Saint George of Burgundy, they have the insolence to advance against the banner of Crèvecœur ! What ! will not the knaves be ruled ? Damian, my lance. Advance banner ! Lay your spears in the rest ! Crèvecœur to the Rescue ! ’

Crying his war-cry, and followed by his men-at-arms, he galloped rapidly forward to charge the Schwarz-reiters.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Surrender.

THE skirmish betwixt the Schwarz-reiters and the Burgundian men-at-arms lasted scarcely five minutes, so soon were the former put to the rout by the superiority of the latter in armour, weight of horse, and military spirit. In less than the space we have mentioned, the Count of Crèvecœur, wiping his bloody sword upon his horse’s mane ere he sheathed it, came back to the verge of the forest, where Isabelle had remained a spectator of the combat. One part of his people followed him, while the other continued to pursue the flying enemy for a little space along the highway.

‘ It is shame,’ said the Count, ‘ that the weapons of knights and gentlemen should be soiled by the blood of those brutal swine.’

So saying, he returned his weapon to the sheath, and added : ‘ This is a rough welcome to your home, my pretty cousin, but wandering princesses must expect such adventures. And well I came up in time, for, let me assure you, the Black Troopers respect a countess’s coronet as little as a country-wench’s coif.’

'My Lord Count,' said the Lady Isabelle, 'without further preface, let me know whether I am a prisoner, and where you are to conduct me.'

'You know, you silly child,' answered the Count, 'how I would answer that question, did it rest on my own will. But you and your foolish match-making, marriage-hunting aunt, have made such wild use of your wings of late, that I fear you must be contented to fold them up in a cage for a little while. For my part, my duty, and it is a sad one, will be ended when I have conducted you to the Court of the Duke, at Peronne.'

'Yet one moment, cousin of Crèvecoeur,' said the Countess Isabelle, 'and let me, in yielding myself prisoner, stipulate at least for the safety of those who have befriended me in my misfortunes. Permit this good fellow, my trusty guide, to go back unharmed to his native town of Liege.'

'My nephew,' said Crèvecoeur, after looking sharply at Glover's honest breadth of countenance, 'will guard this good fellow, who seems, indeed, to have little harm in him, as far into the territory as he himself advances, and then leave him at liberty.'

'Fail not to remember me to the kind Gertrude,' said the Countess to her guide, and added, taking a string of pearls from under her veil, 'Pray her to wear this in remembrance of her unhappy friend.'

Honest Glover took the string of pearls, and kissed, with clownish gesture, but with sincere kindness, the fair hand which had found such a delicate mode of remunerating his own labours and peril.

'Umph! signs and tokens!' said the Count; 'any further bequests to make, my fair cousin? It is time we were on our way.'

'Only,' said the Countess, making an effort to speak, 'that you will be pleased to be favourable to this—this young gentleman.'

'Umph!' said Crèvecoeur, casting the same penetrating glance on Quentin as he had bestowed on Glover, but apparently with a much less satisfactory result. 'Umph! Ay—this is a blade of another temper. And pray, my

cousin, what has this—this *very* young gentleman done to deserve such intercession at your hands?’

‘He has saved my life and honour,’ said the Countess, reddening with shame and resentment.

Quentin also blushed with indignation, but wisely concluded that to give vent to it might only make matters worse.

‘Life and honour? Umph!’ said again the Count Crèvecoeur; ‘I think it would have been as well, my cousin, if you had not put yourself in the way of lying under such obligations to this very young gentleman. But let it pass. The young gentleman may wait on us, if his quality permit, and I shall see he has no injury—only I shall myself take in future the office of protecting your life and honour, and may perhaps find for him some fitter duty than that of being a squire of the body to damosels errant.’

‘My Lord Count,’ said Durward, unable to keep silence any longer, ‘I take leave to tell you that I am Quentin Durward, an Archer of the Scottish Body-guard, in which, as you well know, none but gentlemen and men of honour are enrolled.’

‘I thank you for your information, Seignior Archer,’ said Crèvecoeur, in the same tone of raillery. ‘Have the goodness to ride with me to the front of the party.’

‘My Lord Count of Crèvecoeur,’ he said, in a temperate but firm tone of voice, ‘may I request of you, before our interview goes further, to tell me whether I am at liberty, or am to account myself your prisoner?’

‘A shrewd question,’ replied the Count, ‘which at present I can answer only by another—Are France and Burgundy, think you, at peace or war with each other?’

‘That,’ replied the Scot, ‘you, my lord, should certainly know better than I. I have been absent from the Court of France, and have heard no news for some time.’

‘Look you there,’ said the Count; ‘you see how easy it is to ask questions, but how difficult to answer them. Why, I myself, who have been at Peronne with the Duke for this week and longer, cannot resolve this riddle any more than you; and yet, Sir Squire, upon the solution of that question depends the said point, whether you are prisoner or free man; and, for the present, I must hold

you as the former. Only, if you have really and honestly been of service to my kinswoman, and if you are candid in your answers to the questions I shall ask, affairs shall stand the better with you.'

'The Countess of Croye,' said Quentin, 'is best judge whether I have rendered any service, and to her I refer you on that matter. My answers you will yourself judge of when you ask me your questions.'

'Umph!—haughty enough,' muttered the Count of Crèvecoeur. 'Well, sir, I trust it will be no abatement of your dignity, if you answer me, how long you have been about the person of the Lady Isabelle of Croye?'

'Count of Crèvecoeur,' said Quentin Durward, 'I have acted as escort to the Lady Isabelle since she left France to retire into Flanders.'

'Ho! ho!' said the Count; 'and that is to say, since she fled from Plessis-les-Tours? You, an Archer of the Scottish Guard, accompanied her, of course, by the express orders of King Louis?'

However little Quentin thought himself indebted to the King of France, he did not conceive himself at liberty to betray any trust which Louis had reposed, or had seemed to repose in him, and therefore replied to Count Crèvecoeur's inference, 'that it was sufficient for him to have the authority of his superior officer for what he had done, and he inquired no further.'

'It is quite sufficient,' said the Count. 'We know the King does not permit his officers to send the Archers of his Guard to prance like paladins by the bridle-rein of wandering ladies, unless he has some politic purpose to serve. It will be difficult for King Louis to continue to aver so boldly that he knew not of the Ladies of Croye's having escaped from France, since they were escorted by one of his own Life-guard. And whither, Sir Archer, was your retreat directed?'

'To Liege, my lord,' answered the Scot; 'where the ladies desired to be placed under the protection of the late Bishop.'

'The *late* Bishop!' exclaimed the Count of Crèvecoeur; 'is Louis of Bourbon dead? Not a word of his illness had reached the Duke. Of what did he die?'

'He sleeps in a bloody grave, my lord—that is, if his murderers have conferred one on his remains.'

'Murdered !' exclaimed Crèvecoeur again—'Holy Mother of Heaven !—young man, it is impossible !'

'I saw the deed done with my own eyes, and many an act of horror besides.'

'Saw it ! and made not to help the good Prelate !' exclaimed the Count, 'or to raise the Castle against his murderers ? Know you not that even to look on such a deed, without resisting it, is profane sacrilege ?'

'To be brief, my lord,' said Durward, 'ere this act was done, the Castle was stormed by the bloodthirsty William de la Marck, with help of the insurgent Liegeois.'

'I am struck with thunder !' said Crèvecoeur. 'Liege in insurrection !—Schonwaldt taken !—the Bishop murdered ! Messenger of sorrow, never did one man unfold such a packet of woes ! Speak—knew you of this assault—of this insurrection—of this murder ? Speak—you are one of Louis's trusted Archers, and it is he that has aimed this painful arrow.'

'My lord, I know no more of these villainies than you—was so far from being partaker in them that I would have withstood them to the uttermost, had my means, in a twentieth degree, equalled my inclination. But what could I do?—they were hundreds, and I but one. My only care was to rescue the Countess Isabelle, and in that I was happily successful. Yet, had I been near enough when the ruffian deed was so cruelly done on the old man, I had saved his gray hairs, or I had avenged them ; and, as it was, my abhorrence was spoken loud enough to prevent other horrors.'

'I believe you, youth,' said the Count ; 'you are neither of an age nor nature to be trusted with such bloody work, however well fitted to be the squire of dames. But, alas ! for the kind and generous Prelate, to be murdered on the hearth where he so often entertained the stranger with Christian charity and princely bounty—and that by a wretch, a monster !—bred up in the very hall where he has imbibed his hands in his benefactor's blood ! But I know not Charles of Burgundy—nay, I should doubt of the justice

of Heaven, if vengeance be not as sharp, and sudden, and severe, as this villainy has been unexampled in atrocity.'

The Count of Crèvecoeur proceeded to question Durward more minutely concerning the particulars of the disastrous affair, which the Scot, nowise desirous to abate the spirit of revenge which the Count entertained against William de la Marck, gave him at full length.

In the evening they reached the town of Charleroi, on the Sambre, where the Count of Crèvecoeur had determined to leave the Countess Isabelle. He consigned her, in a state of great exhaustion, to the care of the Abbess of the Cistercian convent in Charleroi, a noble lady, to whom both the families of Crèvecoeur and Croye were related, and in whose prudence and kindness he could repose confidence.

Crèvecoeur himself only stopped to recommend the utmost caution to the governor of a small Burgundian garrison who occupied the place, and required him also to mount a guard of honour upon the convent during the residence of the Countess Isabelle of Croye—ostensibly to secure her safety, but perhaps secretly to prevent her attempting to escape. The Count only assigned as a cause for the garrison being vigilant, some vague rumours which he had heard of disturbances in the Bishopric of Liege. But he was determined himself to be the first who should carry the formidable news of the insurrection and the murder of the Bishop, in all their horrible reality, to Duke Charles; and for that purpose, having procured fresh horses for himself and suite, he mounted with the resolution of continuing his journey to Peronne without stopping for repose; and informing Quentin Durward that he must attend him, he made, at the same time, a mock apology for parting fair company, but hoped that to so devoted a squire of dames a night's journey by moonshine would be more agreeable than supinely to yield himself to slumber like an ordinary mortal.

Quentin, already sufficiently afflicted by finding that he was to be parted from Isabelle, longed to answer this taunt with an indignant defiance; but aware that the Count would only laugh at his anger, and despise his challenge, he resolved to wait some future time, when he might have

an opportunity of obtaining some amends from this proud lord, who, though for very different reasons, had become nearly as odious to him as the Wild Boar of Ardennes himself. He therefore assented to Crèvecoeur's proposal, which he had no choice of declining, and they pursued in company, and with all the dispatch they could exert, the road between Charleroi and Peronne.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Unbidden Guest.

WHEN at length they reached the town of Landrecy, the Count, in compassion to the youth, who had now been in a great measure without sleep for three nights, allowed himself and his retinue a halt of four hours, for rest and refreshment.

Deep and sound were Quentin's slumbers, until they were broken by the sound of the Count's trumpet, and the cry of his guards, 'Up ! Up ! Ha ! gentlemen, to horse, to horse !' Yet, unwelcomely early as the tones came, they awaked him a different being in strength and spirits from what he had fallen asleep. Confidence in himself and his fortunes returned with his reviving spirits, and with the rising sun.

The little party came at last within two miles of the famous and strong town of Peronne, near which the Duke of Burgundy's army lay encamped, ready, as was supposed, to invade France ; and, in opposition to which, Louis XI. had himself assembled a strong force near Saint Maxence, for the purpose of bringing to reason his over-powerful vassal.

Peronne, situated upon a deep river, in a flat country, and surrounded by strong bulwarks and profound moats, was accounted in ancient, as in modern times, one of the strongest fortresses in France. The Count of Crèvecoeur, his retinue, and his prisoner, were approaching the fortress about the third hour of the afternoon ; when they were met by two men of rank, dressed in the habits worn in time of peace ; and who, to judge from the falcons which they carried on their wrists, and the number of spaniels and

greyhounds led by their followers, were engaged in the amusement of hawking. But on perceiving Crèvecoeur they came galloping towards him.

'News, news, Count of Crèvecoeur!' they cried both together; 'will you give news, or take news? or will you barter fairly?'

'I would barter fairly, Messires,' said Crèvecoeur, after saluting them courteously, 'did I conceive you had any news of importance sufficient to make an equivalent for mine.'

The person whom he particularly addressed was a lively-looking man, with an eye of great vivacity, which was corrected by an expression of reflection and gravity about the mouth and upper lip—the whole physiognomy marking a man who saw and judged rapidly, but was sage and slow in forming resolutions or in expressing opinions. This was the famous Knight of Hainault, known in history, and amongst historians, by the venerable name of Philip des Comines, at this time close to the person of Duke Charles the Bold, and one of his most esteemed counsellors. He answered Crèvecoeur's question concerning the complexion of the news of which he and his companion, the Baron d'Hymbercourt, were the depositaries.

'We must open our bales,' said Comines to his companion, 'or our market will be forestalled by some newcomers, for ours are public news. In one word, Crèvecoeur—listen, and wonder—King Louis is at Peronne!'

'What!' said the Count, in astonishment; 'has the Duke retreated without a battle? and do you remain here in your dress of peace, after the town is besieged by the French?—for I cannot suppose it taken.'

'No, surely,' said D'Hymbercourt, 'the banners of Burgundy have not gone back a foot; and still King Louis is here.'

'Then Edward of England must have come over the seas with his bowmen,' said Crèvecoeur, 'and, like his ancestors, gained a second field of Poictiers.'

'Not so,' said Comines. 'Not a French banner has been borne down, not a sail spread from England. Hear the extraordinary truth. You know, when you left us, that

the conference between the commissioners on the parts of France and Burgundy was broken up, without apparent chance of reconciliation ?'

'True ; and we dreamt of nothing but war.'

'What has followed has been indeed so like a dream,' said Comines, 'that I almost expect to awake, and find it so. Only one day since, the Duke had in council protested so furiously against further delay, that it was resolved to send a defiance to the King, and march forward instantly into France. Toison d'Or, commissioned for the purpose, had put on his official dress, and had his foot in the stirrup to mount his horse, when lo ! the French herald Mont-joie rode into our camp. We thought of nothing else than that Louis had been beforehand with our defiance ; and began to consider how much the Duke would resent the advice, which had prevented him from being the first to declare war. But a council being speedily assembled, what was our wonder when the herald informed us that Louis, King of France, was scarce an hour's riding behind, intending to visit Charles, Duke of Burgundy, with a small retinue, in order that their differences might be settled at a personal interview !'

'And what said the Duke ?' continued the Count of Crèvecoeur.

'Spoke brief and bold, as usual,' replied Comines. '"Well," said the Duke, "if my royal kinsman comes hither in singleness of heart, he shall be royally welcome. If it is meant by this appearance of confidence, to circumvent and to blind me, till he execute some of his politic schemes, by Saint George of Burgundy, let him look to it !" And so, having turned up his moustaches, and stamped on the ground, he ordered us all to get on our horses, and receive so extraordinary a guest.'

'And you met the King accordingly ?' replied the Count of Crèvecoeur. 'Miracles have not ceased ! How was he accompanied ?'

'As slightly as might be,' answered D'Hymbercourt : 'only a score or two of the Scottish Guard, and a few knights and gentlemen of his household, among whom his astrologer, Galeotti, made the gayest figure.'

'And where is he lodged ?' said Crèvecoeur.

'Nay, that,' replied Comines, 'is the most marvellous of all. He craved to be quartered in the Castle of Peronne, and *there* he has his abode accordingly. And now our news is told, noble Crèvecœur, and what think you it resembles?'

'A mine full-charged with gunpowder,' answered Crèvecœur, 'to which, I fear, it is my fate to bring the kindled linstock. Your news and mine are like flax and fire, which cannot meet without bursting into flame. Friends, gentlemen, ride close by my rein; and when I tell you what has chanced in the bishopric of Liege, I think you will be of opinion that King Louis might as safely have undertaken a pilgrimage to the infernal regions as this ill-timed visit to Peronne.'

The two nobles drew up close on either hand of the Count, and listened, with half-suppressed exclamations, and gestures of the deepest wonder and interest, to his account of the transactions at Liege and Schonwaldt. Quentin was then called forward, and examined and re-examined, on the particulars of the Bishop's death, until at length he refused to answer any further interrogatories, not knowing wherefore they were asked, or what use might be made of his replies.

They now reached the rich and level banks of the Somme, and the ancient walls of the little town of Peronne la Pucelle, and the deep green meadows adjoining, now whitened with the numerous tents of the Duke of Burgundy's army, amounting to about fifteen thousand men.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Explosion.

ON the following morning after the King's arrival, there was a general muster of the troops of the Duke of Burgundy, which were so numerous and so excellently appointed that, perhaps, he was not sorry to have an opportunity of displaying them before his great rival. Indeed, while he paid the necessary compliment of a vassal to his Suzerain, in declaring that these troops were the King's, and not his own, the curl of his upper lip, and the

proud glance of his eye, intimated his consciousness that the words he used were but empty compliment, and that his fine army, at his own unlimited disposal, was as ready to march against Paris as in any other direction.

True to his character, Louis laboured diligently, but at the same time cautiously, to make interest with the Duke's chief officers and advisers, employing for that purpose the usual means of familiar and frequent notice, adroit flattery and liberal presents.

The notice of so great and so wise a King was in itself a mighty bribe ; promises did much, and direct gifts, which the customs of the time permitted the Burgundian courtiers to accept without scruple, did still more.

One man alone the King missed, whom he had been particularly desirous of conciliating, and that was the Count de Crèvecoeur, whose firmness, during his conduct as Envoy at Plessis, far from exciting Louis's resentment, had been viewed as a reason for making him his own if possible. He was not particularly gratified when he learned that the Count, at the head of a hundred lances, was gone towards the frontiers of Brabant, to assist the Bishop, in case of necessity, against William de la Marck and his discontented subjects ; but he consoled himself that the appearance of this force, joined with the directions which he had sent by faithful messengers, would serve to prevent any premature disturbances in that country, the breaking out of which might, he foresaw, render his present situation very precarious.

One evening King Louis found a banquet prepared with such a profusion of splendour and magnificence as became the wealth of his formidable vassal, possessed as he was of almost all the Low Countries, then the richest portion of Europe. At the head of the long board, which groaned under plate of gold and silver, filled to profusion with the most exquisite dainties, sat the Duke, and on his right hand, upon a seat more elevated than his own, was placed his royal guest. Behind him stood Le Glorieux, his jester, without whom he seldom stirred ; for, like most men of his hasty and coarse character, Charles carried to extremity the general taste of that age for court-fools and jesters—ex-

periencing that pleasure in their display of eccentricity and mental infirmity, which his more acute, but not more benevolent rival, loved better to extract from marking the imperfections of humanity in its nobler specimens, and finding subject for mirth in the ‘fears of the brave, and follies of the wise.’

But, on the present occasion, Louis neglected not to take notice of the favourite buffoon of the Duke, and to applaud his repartees ; which he did the rather that he thought he saw that the folly of Le Glorieux covered more than the usual quantity of shrewd and caustic observation proper to his class.

To this personage Charles, and Louis, in imitation of his host, often addressed themselves during the entertainment ; and both seemed to manifest, by hearty laughter, their amusement at the answers of Le Glorieux.

‘Whose seats be those that are vacant?’ said Charles to the jester.

‘One of those at least should be mine by right of succession, Charles,’ replied Le Glorieux.

‘Why so, knave?’ said Charles.

‘Because they belong to the Sieur D’Hymbercourt and Des Comines, who are gone so far to fly their falcons that they have forgotten their supper. They who would rather look at a kite on the wing than a pheasant on the board are of kin to the fool, and he should succeed to the stools, as a part of their movable estate.’

‘That is but a stale jest, my friend Tiel,’ said the Duke ; ‘but, fools or wise men, here come the defaulters.’

As he spoke, Comines and D’Hymbercourt entered the room, and, after having made their reverence to the two Princes, assumed in silence the seats which were left vacant for them.

‘What ho ! sirs,’ exclaimed the Duke, addressing them, ‘your sport has been either very good or very bad, to lead you so far and so late. Sir Philip des Comines, you are dejected—has D’Hymbercourt won so heavy a wager of you? You are a philosopher, and should not grieve at bad fortune. By Saint George ! D’Hymbercourt looks as sad as you do. How now, sirs? Have you found no game?’

or have you lost your falcons? By my honour, you seem as if you were come to a funeral, not a festival.'

While the Duke spoke, the eyes of the company were all directed towards D'Hymbercourt and Des Comines, and the embarrassment and dejection of their countenances, neither being of that class of persons to whom such expression of anxious melancholy was natural, became so remarkable that the mirth and laughter of the company, was gradually hushed; and, men spoke in whispers to each other, as on the eve of expecting some strange and important tidings.

'What means this silence, Messires?' said the Duke, elevating his voice, which was naturally harsh. 'If you bring these strange looks, and this stranger silence, into festivity, we shall wish you had abode in the marshes.'

'My gracious lord,' said Des Comines, 'as we were about to return hither from the forest, we met the Count of Crèvecoeur.'

'How!' said the Duke; 'already returned from Brabant?—but he found all well there, doubtless?'

'The Count himself will presently give your Grace an account of his news,' said D'Hymbercourt, 'which we have heard but imperfectly.'

'Body of me, where is the Count?' said the Duke.

'He changes his dress, to wait upon your Highness,' answered D'Hymbercourt.

'His dress?' exclaimed the impatient Prince, 'what care I for his dress? I think you have conspired with him to drive me mad!'

'Or rather, to be plain,' said Des Comines, 'he wishes to communicate his news at a private audience.'

'My Lord King,' said Charles, 'this is ever the way our counsellors serve us. If they have got hold of aught which they consider as important for our ear, they look as grave upon the matter, and are as proud of their burden as an ass of a new pack-saddle. Some one bid Crèvecoeur come to us directly! He comes from the frontiers of Liege, and *we*, at least' (he laid some emphasis on the pronoun), 'have no secrets in that quarter which we would shun to have proclaimed before the assembled world.'

A brief interval intervened, during which the Duke remained looking eagerly to the door, as if in a transport of impatience, whilst the guests sat with their eyes bent on the table, as if to conceal their curiosity and anxiety. Louis alone maintaining perfect composure, continued his conversation alternately with the grand carver and with the jester.

At length Crèvecoeur entered, and was presently saluted by the hurried question of his master, 'What news from Liege and Brabant, Sir Count? The report of your arrival has chased mirth from our table; we hope your actual presence will bring it back to us.'

'My liege and master,' answered the Count, in a firm, but melancholy tone, 'the news which I bring you is fitter for the council board than the feasting table.'

'Out with it, man,' said the Duke; 'but I can guess it—the Liegeois are again in mutiny.'

'They are, my lord,' said Crèvecoeur, very gravely.

'Look there, man,' said the Duke. 'I have hit at once on what you have been so much afraid to mention to me—the harebrained burghers are again in arms. It could not be in better time, for we may at present have the advice of our own Suzerain,' bowing to King Louis, with eyes which spoke the most bitter, though suppressed resentment, 'to teach us how such mutineers should be dealt with. Have you more news in your packet? Out with it, and then answer for yourself why you went not forward to assist the Bishop.'

'My lord, the further tidings are heavy for me to tell, and will be afflicting to you to hear. No aid of mine, or of living chivalry, could have availed the excellent Prelate. William de la Marck, united with the insurgent Liegeois, has taken his Castle of Schonwaldt, and murdered him in his own hall.'

'Murdered him!' repeated the Duke, in a deep and low tone, but which nevertheless was heard from the one end of the hall in which they were assembled to the other. 'You have been imposed upon, Crèvecoeur, by some wild report; it is impossible!'

'Alas! my lord,' said the Count, 'I have it from an eyewitness, an archer of the King of France's Scottish

Guard, who was in the hall when the murder was committed by William de la Marck's order.'

'And who was doubtless aiding and abetting in the horrible sacrilege!' exclaimed the Duke, starting up and stamping with his foot with such fury that he dashed in pieces the footstool which was placed before him. 'Bar the doors of this hall, gentlemen—secure the windows—let no stranger stir from his seat, upon pain of instant death! Gentlemen of my chamber, draw your swords.' And turning upon Louis, he advanced his own hand slowly and deliberately to the hilt of his weapon, while the King, without either showing fear or assuming a defensive posture, only said:

'This news, fair cousin, has staggered your reason.'

'No!' replied the Duke, in a terrible tone, 'but it has awakened a just resentment, which I have too long suffered to be stifled by trivial considerations of circumstance and place. Murderer of your brother!—rebel against your parent!—tyrant over your subjects!—treacherous ally!—perjured King!—dishonoured gentleman!—you are in my power, and I thank God for it.'

'Rather thank my folly,' said the King; 'for when we met on equal terms at Montlhéry, I fancy you wished yourself farther from me than you are now.'

The Duke still held his hand on the hilt of his sword, but refrained to draw his weapon, or to strike a foe, who offered no sort of resistance which could in anywise provoke violence.

Meanwhile, wild and general confusion spread itself through the hall. The doors were now fastened and guarded by order of the Duke; but several of the French nobles, few as they were in number, started from their seats, and prepared for the defence of their Sovereign. Louis had spoken not a word either to Orleans or Dunois since they were liberated from restraint at the Castle of Loches—if it could be termed liberation, to be dragged in King Louis's train, objects of suspicion evidently, rather than of respect and regard; but, nevertheless, the voice of Dunois was first heard above the tumult, addressing himself to the Duke of Burgundy. 'Sir Duke, you have forgotten that you are a vassal of France, and that we, your

guests, are Frenchmen. If you lift a hand against our Monarch, prepare to sustain the utmost effects of our despair ; for, credit me, we shall feast as high with the blood of Burgundy as we have done with its wine. Courage, my Lord of Orleans ; and you, gentlemen of France, form yourselves round Dunois, and do as he does !'

It was in that moment when a king might see upon what tempers he could certainly rely. The few independent nobles and knights who attended Louis, most of whom had received from him only frowns of discountenance, unappalled by the display of infinitely superior force, and the certainty of destruction in case they came to blows, hastened to array themselves around Dunois, and, led by him, to press towards the head of the table where the contending Princes were seated.

On the contrary, the tools and agents whom Louis had dragged forward out of their fitting and natural places, into importance which was not due to them, showed cowardice and cold heart, and, remaining still in their seats, seemed resolved not to provoke their fate by meddling, whatever might become of their benefactor.

The first of the more generous party was the venerable Lord Crawford, who, with an agility which no one would have expected at his years, forced his way through all opposition and threw himself boldly between the King and the Duke.

'I have fought for his father and his grandsire,' that was all he said, 'and, by Saint Andrew, end the matter as it will, I shall not fail him at this pinch.'

What has taken some time to narrate happened, in fact, with the speed of light ; for so soon as the Duke assumed his threatening posture, Crawford had thrown himself betwixt him and the object of his vengeance ; and the French gentlemen, drawing together as fast as they could, were crowding to the same point.

The Duke of Burgundy still remained with his hand on his sword, and seemed in the act of giving the signal for a general onset, which must necessarily have ended in the massacre of the weaker party, when Crèvecoeur rushed forward, and exclaimed, in a voice like a trumpet : 'My liege Lord of Burgundy, beware what you do ! This is your

hall—you are the King's vassal—do not spill the blood of your guest on your hearth, the blood of your Sovereign on the throne you have erected for him, and to which he came under your safeguard. For the sake of your house's honour, do not attempt to revenge one horrid murder by another yet worse !'

'Out of my road, Crèveœur,' answered the Duke, 'and let my vengeance pass ! (Out of my path ! The wrath of kings is to be dreaded like that of Heaven.)'

'Only when, like that of Heaven, it is *just*,' answered Crèveœur firmly. 'Let me pray of you, my lord, to rein the violence of your temper, however justly offended. And for you, my Lords of France, where resistance is unavailing, let me recommend you to forbear whatever may lead towards bloodshed.'

'He is right,' said Louis, whose coolness forsook him not in that dreadful moment. 'My cousin Orleans, kind Dunois, and you, my trusty Crawford, bring not on ruin and bloodshed by taking offence too hastily. Our cousin the Duke is chafed at the tidings of the death of a near and loving friend, the venerable Bishop of Liege, whose slaughter we lament as he does. Ancient, and, unhappily, recent subjects of jealousy, lead him to suspect us of having abetted a crime which our bosom abhors. Should our host murder us on the spot—us, his King and his kinsman—under a false impression of our being accessory to this unhappy accident, our fate will be little lightened, but, on the contrary, greatly aggravated, by your stirring. Therefore, stand back, Crawford. Were it my last word, I speak as a King to his officer, and demand obedience. Stand back, and, if it is required, yield up your sword. I command you to do so, and your oath obliges you to obey.'

The Duke stood with his eyes fixed on the ground for a considerable space, and then said, with bitter irony : 'Crèveœur, you say well ; and it concerns our honour that our obligations to this great King, our honoured and loving guest, be not so hastily adjusted, as in our hasty anger we had at first proposed. We shall so act, that all Europe shall acknowledge the justice of our proceedings. Gentlemen of France, you must render up your arms to

my officers ! Your master has broken the truce, and has no title to take further benefit of it. In compassion, however, to your sentiments of honour, and in respect to the rank which he hath disgraced, and the race from which he has degenerated, we ask not our cousin Louis's sword.'

'Not one of us,' said Dunois, 'will resign our weapon, or quit this hall unless we are assured of at least our King's safety, in life and limb.'

'Nor will a man of the Scottish Guard,' exclaimed Crawford, 'lay down his arms, save at the command of the King of France, or his High Constable.'

'Brave Dunois,' said Louis, 'and you, my trusty Crawford, your zeal will do me injury instead of benefit, I trust,' he added with dignity, 'in my rightful cause, more than in a vain resistance, which would but cost the lives of my best and bravest. Give up your swords—the noble Burgundians, who accept such honourable pledges, will be more able than you are to protect both you and me. Give up your swords. It is I who command you.'

It was thus that, in this dreadful emergency, Louis showed the promptitude of decision and clearness of judgment, which alone could have saved his life. He was aware that, until actual blows were exchanged, he should have the assistance of most of the nobles present to moderate the fury of their Prince ; but that were a *mélée* once commenced, he himself and his few adherents must be murdered instantly. At the same time, his worst enemies confessed that his demeanour had in it nothing either of meanness or cowardice. He shunned to aggravate into frenzy the wrath of the Duke ; but he neither deprecated nor seemed to fear it, and continued to look on him with the calm and fixed attention with which a brave man eyes the menacing gestures of a lunatic, whilst conscious that his own steadiness and composure operate as an insensible and powerful check on the rage even of insanity.

Crawford, at the King's command, threw his sword to Crèvecoeur, saying : 'Take it ! and the devil give you joy of it. It is no dishonour to the rightful owner who yields it, for we have had no fair play.'

'Hold, gentlemen,' said the Duke, in a broken voice, as one whom passion had almost deprived of utterance,

'retain your swords ; it is sufficient you promise not to use them. And you, Louis of Valois, must regard yourself as my prisoner, until you are cleared of having abetted sacrilege and murder. Have him to the Castle—have him to Earl Herbert's Tower. Let him have six gentlemen of his train to attend him, such as he will choose. My Lord of Crawford, your guard must leave the Castle, and will be honourably quartered elsewhere. Up with every drawbridge, and down with every portcullis. Let the gates of the town be trebly guarded. You, D'Humbercourt, look that patrols of horse and foot make the round of the town every half-hour during the night, and every hour during the next day. Look to the person of Louis, as you love your life !'

He started from the table in fierce and moody haste, darted a glance of mortal enmity at the King, and rushed out of the apartment.

'Sirs,' said the King, looking with dignity around him, 'grief for the death of his ally has made your Prince frantic. I trust you know better your duty, as knights and noblemen, than to abet him in his treasonable violence against the person of his liege Lord.'

At this moment was heard in the streets the sound of drums beating, and horns blowing, to call out the soldiery in every direction.

'We are,' said Crèvecoeur, who acted as the Marshal of the Duke's household, 'subjects of Burgundy, and must do our duty as such. Our hopes and prayers, and our efforts, will not be wanting to bring about peace and union between your Majesty and our liege Lord. Meantime, we must obey his commands. I myself must be your Majesty's chamberlain, and bring you to your apartments. You have only to choose your attendants, whom the Duke's commands limit to six.'

'Then,' said the King, looking around him, and thinking for a moment, 'I desire the attendance of Oliver le Dain, of a private of my Life-Guard, called Balafré, who may be unarmed if you will ; of Tristan l'Hermite, with two of his people ; and my right loyal and trusty philosopher, Martius Galeotti.'

'Your Majesty's will shall be complied with in all points,' said the Count de Crèvecœur. 'Galeotti,' he added, after a moment's inquiry, 'is, I understand, at present supping in some merry company, but he shall instantly be sent for; the others will obey your Majesty's command upon the instant.'

'Forward, then, to the new abode, which the hospitality of our cousin provides for us,' said the King. 'We know it is strong, and have only to hope it may be in a corresponding degree safe.'

CHAPTER XXIV.

Uncertainty.

FORTY men-at-arms served as the escort, or rather the guard, of King Louis, from the town-hall of Peronne to the Castle; and as he entered within its darksome and gloomy strength, it seemed as if a voice screamed in his ear that warning which the Florentine has inscribed over the portal of the infernal regions, 'Leave all hope behind!'

To aggravate the King's painful feelings, he saw, as he crossed the courtyard, several bodies, over each of which had been hastily flung a military cloak. He was not long of discerning that they were corpses of slain archers of the Scottish Guard, who having disputed, as the Count Crèvecœur informed him, the command given them to quit the post near the King's apartments, a brawl had ensued between them and the Duke's Walloon body-guards, and before it could be composed by the officers on either side, several lives had been lost.

'My trusty Scots!' said the King, as he looked upon this melancholy spectacle; 'had they brought only man to man, all Flanders, ay, and Burgundy to boot, had not furnished champions to mate you.'

'Yes, an' if it please your Majesty,' said Balafré, who attended close behind the King, 'few men can fight more than two at once. I myself never care to meet three, unless it be in the way of special duty, when one must not stand to count heads.'

'Are you there, old acquaintance?' said the King, looking behind him; 'then I have one true subject with me yet.'

'And a faithful minister, whether in your councils, or in his offices about your royal person,' whispered Oliver le Dain.

'We are all faithful,' said Tristan l'Hermite gruffly; 'for should they put to death your Majesty, there is no one of us whom they would suffer to survive you, even if we would.'

'Now, that is what I call good corporal bail for fidelity,' said Le Glorieux, who, with the restlessness proper to an infirm brain, had thrust himself into their company.

Meanwhile, the Seneschal, hastily summoned, was turning, with laborious effort the ponderous key which opened the reluctant gate of the huge Gothic Keep, and was at last fain to call for the assistance of one of Crèvecoeur's attendants. When they had succeeded, six men entered with torches, and showed the way through a narrow and winding passage. At the end of this passage arose a stair of corresponding rudeness, consisting of huge blocks of stone, roughly dressed with the hammer, and of unequal height. Having mounted this ascent, a strong iron-clenched door admitted them to what had been the great hall of the donjon, lighted but very faintly even during the daytime (for the apertures, diminished in appearance by the excessive thickness of the walls, resembled slits rather than windows), and now, but for the blaze of the torches, almost perfectly dark. Two or three bats, roused by the unusual glare, flew against the lights, and threatened to extinguish them; while the Seneschal formally apologized to the King that the State-hall had not been put in order, such was the hurry of the notice sent to him; and adding that, in truth, the apartment had not been in use for twenty years, and rarely before that time, so far as ever he had heard, since the time of King Charles the Simple.

'King Charles the Simple!' echoed Louis; 'I know the history of the Tower now. He was here murdered by his treacherous vassal, Herbert, Earl of Vermandois—so say

our annals. I knew there was something concerning the Castle of Peronne which dwelt on my mind, though I could not recall the circumstance. *Here*, then, my predecessor was slain ?'

'Not here, not exactly here, and please your Majesty,' said the old Seneschal, stepping with the eager haste of a cicerone, who shows the curiosities of such a place. 'Not *here*, but in the side-chamber a little onward, which opens from your Majesty's bedchamber.'

He hastily opened a door at the upper end of the hall, which led into a bedchamber, small, as is usual in such old buildings ; but, even for that reason, rather more comfortable than the waste hall through which they had passed. Some hasty preparations had been here made for the King's accommodation. Arras had been tacked up, a fire lighted in the rusty grate, which had been long unused, and pallets laid down for those gentlemen who were to pass the night in his chamber, as was then usual.

'We shall get beds in the hall for the rest of your attendants,' said the garrulous old man ; 'but we have had such brief notice, if it please your Majesty. And if it please your Majesty to look upon this little wicket behind the arras, it opens into the little old cabinet where Charles was slain ; and there is a secret passage from below, which admitted the men who were to deal with him. And your Majesty, whose eyesight, I hope, is better than mine, may see the blood still on the oak-floor, though the thing was done five hundred years ago.'

While he thus spoke, he kept fumbling to open the postern of which he spoke, until the King said : 'Forbear, old man—forbear but a little while, when you may have a newer tale to tell, and fresher blood to show. My Lord of Crèvecœur, what say you ?'

'I can but answer, Sire, that these two interior apartments are as much at your Majesty's disposal as those in your own Castle at Plessis, and that Crèvecœur, a name never blackened by treachery or assassination, has the guard of the exterior defences of it.'

'But the private passage into that closet, of which the old man speaks ?' This King Louis said in a low and

anxious tone, holding Crèvecoeur's arm fast with one hand, and pointing to the wicket-door with the other.

'It must be some dream of Mornay's,' said Crèvecoeur, 'or some old and absurd tradition of the place; but we shall examine.'

He was about to open the closet door, when Louis answered: 'No, Crèvecoeur, no. Your honour is sufficient warrant. But what will your Duke do with me, Crèvecoeur? He cannot hope to keep me long a prisoner; and—in short, give me your opinion, Crèvecoeur.'

'My Lord and Sire,' said the Count, 'my master is noble in his disposition, and made incapable, even by the very strength of his passions, of any underhand practices. Whatever he does, will be done in the face of day, and of the two nations. And I can but add that it will be the wish of every counsellor around him—excepting perhaps one—that he should behave in this matter with mildness and generosity, as well as justice.'

'Ah! Crèvecoeur,' said Louis, taking his hand as if affected by some painful recollections, 'how happy is the Prince who has counsellors near him, who can guard him against the effects of his own angry passions! Their names will be read in golden letters, when the history of his reign is perused. Noble Crèvecoeur, had it been my lot to have such as you are about *my* person!'

'It had in that case been your Majesty's study to have got rid of them as fast as you could,' said Le Glorieux.

'Aha! Sir Wisdom, are you there?' said Louis, turning round, and instantly changing the pathetic tone in which he had addressed Crèvecoeur, and adopting with facility one which had a turn of gaiety in it. 'Have you followed us hither?'

'Ay, sir,' answered Le Glorieux. 'Wisdom must follow in motley, where Folly leads the way in purple.'

'How shall I construe that, Sir Solomon?' answered Louis. 'Would you change conditions with me?'

'Not I,' quoth Le Glorieux, 'if you would give me fifty crowns to boot.'

'Why, wherefore so? I fancy I could be well enough contented, as princes go, to have you for my king.'

'Ay, Sire,' replied Le Glorieux ; 'but the question is, whether, judging of your Majesty's wit from its having lodged you here, I should not have cause to be ashamed of having so dull a fool.'

'Peace, sirrah !' said the Count of Crèvecœur ; 'your tongue runs too fast.'

'Let it take its course,' said the King ; 'I know of no such fair subject of raillyery, as the follies of those who should know better. Here, my sagacious friend, take this purse of gold, and with it the advice, never to be so great a fool as to deem yourself wiser than other people.'

The Count of Crèvecœur took his leave ; and shortly after, they could hear the noise of the sentinels moving to their posts, accompanied with the word of command from the officers. At length all became still, and the only sound which filled the air was the sluggish murmur of the river Somine, as it glided, deep and muddy, under the walls of the castle, but for the night Louis knew no rest.

If the night passed by Louis was anxious and agitated, that spent by the Duke of Burgundy, who had at no time the same mastery over his passions, and, indeed, who permitted them almost a free and uncontrolled dominion over his actions, was still more disturbed.

He refused to throw off his clothes, or to make any preparation for sleep ; but spent the night in a succession of the most violent bursts of passion. In some paroxysms he talked incessantly to his attendants so thickly and so rapidly, that they were really afraid his senses would give way ; choosing for his theme the merits and the kindness of heart of the murdered Bishop of Liege, until he had worked himself into such a transport of grief that he threw himself upon his face in the bed, and seemed ready to choke with the sobs and tears which he endeavoured to stifle. Then starting from the couch, he gave vent at once to another and more furious mood, and traversed the room hastily, uttering incoherent threats, while he invoked Saint George and Saint Andrew, to bear witness that he would

take bloody vengeance on De la Marck, on the people of Liege, and on *him* who was the author of the whole. These last threats, uttered more obscurely than the others, obviously concerned the person of the King ; and at one time the Duke expressed his determination to send for the Duke of Normandy, the brother of the King, and with whom Louis was on the worst terms, in order to compel the captive monarch to surrender the Crown.

Another day and night passed in the same rapid transitions of passion ; for the Duke scarcely ate or drank and, altogether, demeaned himself like one in whom rage might terminate in utter insanity. By degrees he became more composed, and began to hold, from time to time, consultations with his ministers, in which much was proposed, but nothing resolved on.

At other times, when Charles had exhausted his fury, he sat with his features fixed in stern and rigid immobility like one who broods over some desperate deed to which he is as yet unable to work up his resolution. And unquestionably it would have needed little more than an insidious hint from any of the counsellors who attended his person to have pushed the Duke to some very desperate action. But the nobles of Burgundy, from the sacred character attached to the person of a King, were almost unanimously inclined to recommend moderate measures. Possibly their zeal in behalf of the King might not be entirely disinterested. Many, as we have mentioned, had already experienced the bounty of the King ; others had either estates or pretensions in France, which placed them a little under his influence ; and it is certain that the treasure, which had loaded four mules when the King entered Peronne, became much lighter in the course of these negotiations.

The Duke listened to these arguments with his looks fixed on the ground, and his brows so knitted together as to bring his bushy eyebrows into one mass. But when Crèvecoeur proceeded to say that he did not believe Louis either knew of, or was accessory to, the atrocious act of violence committed at Schonwaldt, Charles raised his head, and, darting a fierce look at his counsellor, exclaimed : ' Have you too, Crèvecoeur, heard the gold of France clink ?

I think it rings in my councils as merrily as ever the bells of Saint Denis. Dare any one say that Louis is not the fomenter of these feuds in Flanders ?'

' My gracious lord,' said Crèvecoeur, ' my hand has ever been more conversant with steel than with gold ; and so far am I from holding that Louis is free from the charge of having caused the disturbances in Flanders, that it is not long since, in the face of his whole Court, I charged him with that breach of faith, and offered him defiance in your name. But although his intrigues have been doubtless the original cause of these commotions, I am so far from believing that he authorized the death of the Archbishop, that I believe one of his emissaries publicly protested against it ; and I could produce the man, were it your Grace's pleasure to see him.'

' It is our pleasure,' said the Duke. ' Saint George ! can you doubt that we desire to act justly ? Even in the highest flight of our passion, we are known for an upright and a just judge. We shall see France ourself ; we shall ourself charge him with our wrongs, and ourself state to him the reparation which we expect and demand. If he be found guiltless of this murder, the atonement for other crimes may be more easy. If he has been guilty, who will say that a life of penitence in some retired monastery were not a most deserved and a most merciful doom ? Who,' he added, kindling as he spoke, ' who will dare to blame a revenge yet more direct and more speedy ? Let your witness attend. We shall to the Castle at the hour before noon. Some articles we shall minute down with which he must comply, or woe on his head ! others will depend upon the proof. Break up the council, and dismiss yourselves. I shall but change my dress, as this is scarce a fitting trim in which to wait on *my most gracious Sovereign.*'

With a deep and bitter emphasis on the last expression, the Duke arose, and strode out of the room.

' Louis's safety, and, what is worse, the honour of Burgundy depend on the cast of the dice,' said D'Hymercourt to Crèvecoeur and to Des Comines. ' Haste to the Castle, Des Comines ; you have a better filed tongue than either Crèvecoeur or I. Explain to Louis

what storm is approaching ; he will best know how to pilot himself. I trust this life-guardsman will say nothing which can aggravate ; for who knows what may have been the secret commission with which he was charged ?'

'The young man,' said Crèvecoeur, 'seems bold, yet prudent and wary far beyond his years. In all which he said to me he was tender of the King's character, as of that of the Prince whom he serves. I trust he will be equally so in the Duke's presence. I must go seek him, and also the young Countess of Croye.'

'The Countess ! You told us you had left her at Saint Bridget's Nunnery ?'

'Ay, but I was obliged,' said the Count, 'to send for her express, by the Duke's orders. She was in a state of the deepest distress, both on account of the uncertainty of the fate of her kinswoman, the Lady Hameline, and the gloom which overhangs her own.'

The information that the young Countess was in the hands of Charles added fresh and more pointed thorns to Louis's reflections. He was conscious that, by explaining the intrigues by which he had induced the Lady Hameline and her to resort to Peronne, she might supply that evidence which he had removed by the execution of Zamet Maugrabin ; and he knew well how such proof of his having interfered with the rights of the Duke of Burgundy would furnish both motive and pretext for Charles's availing himself to the uttermost of his present predicament.

Louis discoursed on these matters with great anxiety to Des Comines, whose acute and political talents better suited the King's temper than the blunt martial character of Crèvecoeur, or the feudal haughtiness of D'Humbercourt.

'These iron-handed soldiers, my good friend Comines,' he said to his future historian, 'should never enter a King's cabinet, but be left with the halberds and partisans in the ante-chamber. It is with such as you, Philip, whose eyes are gifted with the quick and keen sense that sees beyond the exterior surface of affairs, that Princes should share their council-table, their cabinet—what do I say ?—the most secret recesses of their soul.'

'I would,' continued he, 'that I had such a servant, I had not then been in this unfortunate situation ; which,

nevertheless, I should hardly regret, could I but discover any means of securing the services of so experienced a statist.'

Des Comines said that all his faculties, such as they were, were at the service of his Most Christian Majesty, saving always his allegiance to his rightful lord, Duke Charles of Burgundy.

'And am I one who would seduce you from that allegiance?' said Louis pathetically. 'Alas! am I not now endangered by having reposed too much confidence in my vassal? and can the cause of feudal good faith be more sacred with any than with me, whose safety depends on an appeal to it? No, Philip Des Comines, continue to serve Charles of Burgundy; and you will best serve him by bringing round a fair accommodation with Louis of France. In doing thus, you will serve us both, and one, at least, will be grateful. I trust in your kindness, Philip, at this pinch, more than I do in the purchased assistance of many who have received my gifts. I know you will not counsel your master to abuse such an opportunity, as fortune, and, to speak plain, Des Comines, as my own folly, has afforded him.'

'To *abuse* it, by no means,' answered the historian; 'but most certainly to *use* it.'

'How, and in what degree?' said Louis. 'I am not ass enough to expect that I shall escape without some ransom; but let it be a reasonable one—reason I am ever willing to listen to. What does your Duke expect of me?'

'I am the bearer of no propositions, my lord,' said Des Comines; 'the Duke will soon explain his own pleasure; but some things occur to me as proposals, for which your Majesty ought to hold yourself prepared. As, for example that you should disown the Liegeois, and William de la Marck.'

'As willingly as I disclaim Hell and Satan,' said Louis.

'Ample security will be required that France shall in future abstain from stirring up rebellion among the Flemings.'

'It is something new,' answered the King, 'that a vassal should demand pledges from his Sovereign: but let that pass too. Is your budget of hints yet emptied?'

'Not entirely,' answered the counsellor; 'the Duke of Burgundy though he claims not at present the title of an independent king, desires, nevertheless, to be freed in future from the abject marks of subjection required of him to the crown of France; it is his purpose to close his ducal coronet with an imperial arch, and surmount it with a globe, in emblem that his dominions are independent.'

'And how dares the Duke of Burgundy, the sworn vassal of France,' exclaimed Louis, starting up, and showing an unwonted degree of emotion—'how dares he propose such terms to his Sovereign.'

'Your Majesty's interferences with the Duke's vassals in Flanders,' answered Des Comines calmly, 'will prove an exculpation of my master's conduct, supposing him to insist that, by enlarging his independence, France should in future be debarred from any pretext of doing so.'

'Comines, Comines!' said Louis, arising again, and pacing the room in a pensive manner, 'you cannot mean that the Duke will insist on all these hard conditions?'

'At least I would have your Majesty be in a condition to discuss them all.'

'Well, we shall consider,' replied the King; 'but at least you have reached the extremity of your Duke's unreasonable exaction?'

'My lord,' said Des Comines, 'what remains to be mentioned is a thing which touches you nearly.'

Exclaimed the King impatiently, 'what is it? Speak out, Sir Philip. What other dishonour is he to put on me?'

'No dishonour, my liege; but your Majesty's cousin, the illustrious Duke of Orleans—'

'Ha!' exclaimed the King; but Des Comines proceeded without heeding the interruption.

'—Having conferred his affections on the young Countess Isabelle De Croye, the Duke expects your Majesty will, on your part, as he on his, yield your assent to the marriage.'

'Never, never!' said the King, bursting out into that emotion which he had of late suppressed with much difficulty, and striding about in a disordered haste, which

formed the strongest contrast to the self-command which he usually exhibited. ‘Never, never! Orleans shall not break his plighted faith to my daughter, or marry another while she lives!’

‘Your Majesty,’ said Des Comines, ‘ere you set your mind so keenly against what is proposed, will consider your own want of power to prevent it.’

‘I understand you, my good Sir Philip; but to the matter,’ said the King. ‘To which of those happy propositions is your Duke so much wedded that contradiction will make him unreasonable and untractable?’

‘To any or to all of them, if it please your Majesty, on which you may happen to contradict him. This is precisely what your Majesty must avoid. His fury will waste itself if he be unopposed, and you will presently find him become more friendly and more tractable.’

‘Still,’ said the King, musing, ‘there must be some particular demands which lie deeper at my cousin’s heart than the other proposals. Were I but aware of these, Sir Philip—’

‘Your Majesty may make the lightest of his demands the most important simply by opposing it,’ said Des Comines; ‘nevertheless, my lord, thus far I can say, that every shadow of treaty will be broken off, if your Majesty renounce not William de la Marck and the Liegeois.’

‘I have already said that I will disown them,’ said the King, ‘and well they deserve it at my hand; the villains have commenced their uproar at a moment that might have cost me my life.’

‘He that fires a train of powder,’ replied the historian, ‘must expect a speedy explosion of the mine. But more than mere disavowal of their cause will be expected of your Majesty by Duke Charles; for know, that he will demand your Majesty’s assistance to put the insurrection down, and your royal presence to witness the punishment which he destines for the rebels.’

‘That may scarce consist with our honour, Des Comines,’ said the King.

‘To refuse it will scarcely consist with your Majesty’s safety,’ replied Des Comines. ‘Charles is determined to show the people of Flanders that no hope, nay, no promise,

of assistance from France will save them in their mutinies from the wrath and vengeance of Burgundy.'

'But, Sir Philip, I shall speak plainly,' answered the King. 'Could we but procrastinate the matter, might not these rogues of Liege make their own part good against Duke Charles? The knaves are numerous and steady. Can they not hold out their town against him?'

'With the help of the thousand archers of France whom your Majesty promised them, they might have done something; but—'

'Whom I promised them!' said the King. 'Alas! good Sir Philip! you much wrong me in saying so.'

'—But without whom,' continued Des Comines, not heeding interruption, 'as your Majesty will not *now* likely find it convenient to supply them, what chance will the burghers have of making good their town, in whose walls the large breaches made by Charles after the battle of St. Tron are still unrepaired; so that the lances of Hainault, Brabant, and Burgundy may advance to the attack twenty men in front?'

'The improvident idiots!' said the King. 'If they have thus neglected their own safety, they deserve not my protection. Pass on. I will make no quarrel for their sake.'

'The next point, I fear, will sit closer to your Majesty's heart,' said Des Comines.

'Ah!' replied the King, 'you mean that infernal marriage! I will not consent to the breach of the contract betwixt my daughter Joan and my cousin of Orleans. This match has been my thought by day, my dream by night. I tell you, Sir Philip, I cannot give it up! Besides, it is inhuman to require me, with my own hand, to destroy at once my own scheme of policy, and the happiness of a pair brought up for each other.'

'Are they then so much attached?' said Des Comines.

'One of them at least is,' said the King, 'and the one for whom I am bound to be most anxious. But you smile, Sir Philip—you are no believer in the force of love.'

'Nay,' said Des Comines, 'if it please you, Sire, I am so little an infidel in that particular that I was about to ask whether it would reconcile you in any degree to your acquiescing in the proposed marriage betwixt the Duke of

Orleans and Isabelle de Croye, were I to satisfy you that the Countess's inclinations are so much fixed on another, that it is likely it will never be a match ?'

King Louis sighed. ' Alas ! ' he said, ' my good and dear friend. *Her* inclination, indeed ! Ah, no, Philip ! Little fear of her standing obstinate against the suit of such a lover.'

' Your Majesty may, in the present instance, undervalue the obstinate courage of this young lady. I have picked out of Crèvecoeur that she has formed a romantic attachment to a young squire, who, to say truth, rendered her many services on the road.'

' Ha ! ' said the King. ' An archer of my Guards, by name Quentin Durward ? '

' The same, as I think,' said Des Comines. ' He was made prisoner along with the Countess, travelling almost alone together.'

' Now, our Lord and our Lady be praised ! ' said the King, ' and all laud and honour to the learned Galeotti, who read in the stars that this youth's destiny was connected with mine ! If the maiden be so attached to him as to make her refractory to the will of Burgundy, this Quentin has indeed been rarely useful to me.'

' I believe, my lord,' answered the Burgundian, ' according to Crèvecoeur's report, that there is some chance of her being sufficiently obstinate. But your Majesty well knows that the Duke's disposition is like a sweeping torrent, which only passes smoothly forward when its waves encounter no opposition ; and what may be presented to chafe him into fury, it is impossible even to guess. Were more distinct evidence of your Majesty's practices with the Liegeois and William de la Marck to occur unexpectedly, the issue might be terrible. There are strange news from that country ; they say La Marck hath married Hameline the elder Countess of Croye.'

' That old fool was so mad on marriage that she would have accepted the hand of Satan,' said the King ; ' but that La Marck, beast as he is, should have married her, rather more surprises me.'

' There is a report also,' continued Des Comines, ' that an envoy, or herald, on La Marck's part, is approaching

Peronne ; this is like to drive the Duke frantic with rage. I trust that he has no letters, or the like, to show on your Majesty's part ? '

' Letters to a Wild Boar ! ' answered the King. ' No, no, Sir Philip, I was no such fool as to cast pearls before swine. What little intercourse I had with the brute animal was by message, in which I always employed such low-bred slaves and vagabonds that their evidence would not be received in a trial for robbing a hen-roost.'

' I can, then, only further recommend,' said Des Comines, taking his leave, ' that your Majesty should remain on your guard, be guided by events, and, above all, avoid using any language or argument with the Duke which may better become your dignity than your present condition.'

CHAPTER XXV.

The Interview.

ON the perilous and important morning which preceded the meeting of the two Princes in the Castle of Peronne, Oliver le Dain obtained, by the favour of the Count de Crèvecoeur, an interview betwixt Lord Crawford, accompanied by Le Balafré, and Quentin Durward, who, since he had arrived at Peronne, had been detained in a sort of honourable confinement. Private affairs were assigned as the cause of requesting this meeting ; but it is probable that Crèvecoeur was not sorry to afford an opportunity to Crawford to give some hints to the young archer, which might prove useful to his master.

The meeting between the countrymen was cordial, and even affecting.

' You are a singular youth,' said Crawford, stroking the head of young Durward, as a grandsire might do that of his descendant. ' Certes, you have had as much good fortune as if you had been born with a lucky hood on your head.'

' All comes of his gaining an archer's place at such early years,' said Le Balafré. ' I never was so much talked of, fair nephew, because I was five-and-twenty years old before I was *hors de page*.'

'I fear,' said Quentin, with downcast eyes, 'I shall enjoy that title to distinction but a short time, since it is my purpose to resign the service of the Archer-guard.'

Le Balafré was struck almost mute with astonishment, and Crawford's ancient features gleamed with displeasure. The former at length mustered words enough to say: 'Resign! Leave your place in the Scottish Archers! Such a thing was never dreamt of. I would not give up my situation to be made Constable of France.'

'Hush! Ludovic,' said Crawford; 'this youngster knows better how to shape his course with the wind than we of the old world do. His journey hath given him some pretty tales to tell about King Louis; and he is turning Burgundian, that he may make his own little profit by telling them to Duke Charles.'

'If I thought so,' said Le Balafré, 'I would cut his throat with my own hand, were he fifty times my sister's son!'

'But you would first inquire whether I deserved to be so treated, fair kinsman?' answered Quentin; 'and you, my lord, know that I am no tale-bearer; nor shall either question or torture draw out of me a word to King Louis's prejudice, which may have come to my knowledge while I was in his service. So far my oath of duty keeps me silent. But I shall not remain in that service in which, besides the peril of fair battle with mine enemies, I am to be exposed to the dangers of ambuscade on the part of my friends.'

'Young man,' said Crawford, 'I partly guess your meaning. You have met foul play on the road where you travelled by the King's command, and you think you have reason to charge him with being the author of it?'

'I have been threatened with foul play in the execution of the King's commission,' answered Quentin. 'Whether His Majesty be innocent or guilty in the matter, I leave to God and his own conscience. He fed me when I was a-hungered—received me when I was a wandering stranger. I shall never load him in his adversity with accusations which may indeed be unjust, since I heard them only from the vilest mouths.'

'My dear boy—my own lad!' said Crawford, taking him in his arms. 'You think like a Scot, every joint of

you ! Like one that will forget a cause of quarrel with a friend whose back is already at the wall, and remember nothing of him but his kindness. And now tell me, Quentin, my man, has the King any advice of this brave, Christian, and manly resolution of yours ? Knows he of your purpose, think you ?'

' I really can hardly tell,' answered Quentin ; ' but I assured his learned astrologer, Martius Galeotti, of my resolution to be silent on all that could injure the King with the Duke of Burgundy.

' Stay, my lord,' continued Quentin, and led Lord Crawford a little apart from his uncle. ' I must not forget to mention that there is a person besides in the world who may not think that the same obligation of secrecy, which attaches to me as the King's soldier, -and as having been relieved by his bounty, is at all binding on her.'

' On *her* ! ' replied Crawford. ' Nay, if there be a woman in the secret, the Lord ha' mercy, for we are all on the rocks again ! '

' Do not suppose so, my lord,' replied Durward, ' but use your interest with the Count of Crèvecoeur to permit me an interview with the Countess Isabelle of Croye, who is the party possessed of my secret, and I doubt not that I can persuade her to be silent.'

The old soldier mused for a long time, then shook his head, and at length said : ' There is something in all this, which, by my honour, I do not understand. The Countess Isabelle of Croye—an interview with a lady of her birth, blood, and possessions !—and you, a raw Scottish lad, so certain of carrying your point with her ? You are either strangely confident, my young friend, or else you have used your time well upon the journey. But, by the Cross of Saint Andrew ! I shall move Crèvecoeur in your behalf ; and, as he truly fears that the Duke Charles may be provoked against the King to the extremity, I think it likely he may grant your request, though by my honour it is a comical one ! '

So saying, and shrugging up his shoulders, the old Lord left the apartment.

In a few minutes Crawford returned. The old man seemed in singular humour, laughing and chuckling to

himself at something which he could not help condemning, while he found it irresistibly ludicrous. 'My certes, countryman,' said he, 'but you are not shy—you will never lose fair lady for faint heart! Crèveœur swallowed your proposal as he would have done a cup of vinegar, and swore to me roundly, by all the saints in Burgundy, that were less than the honour of princes and the peace of kingdoms at stake, you should never see even so much as the print of the Countess Isabelle's foot on the clay. A countess! Would no less serve you? But come along; your interview with her must be brief. But I fancy you know how to make the most of little time—ho! ho! ho! By my faith, I can hardly chide you for the presumption, I have such a good will to laugh at it!'

With a brow like scarlet, at once offended and disconcerted by the blunt inferences of the old soldier, and vexed at beholding in what an absurd light his passion was viewed by every person of experience, Durward followed Lord Crawford in silence to the Ursuline convent, in which the Countess was lodged, and in the parlour of which he found the Count de Crèveœur.

'So, young gallant,' said the latter sternly, 'you must see the fair companion of your romantic expedition once more, it seems?'

'Yes, my Lord Count,' answered Quentin firmly; 'and what is more, I must see her alone.'

'That shall never be,' said the Count de Crèveœur, 'Lord Crawford, I make you judge. This young lady, the daughter of my old friend and companion in arms, the richest heiress in Burgundy, has confessed a sort of a—what was I going to say?—in short, she is a fool, and your man-at-arms here a presumptuous coxcomb. In a word, they shall not meet alone.'

'Then will I not speak a single word to the Countess in your presence,' said Quentin, much delighted. 'You have told me much that I did not dare, presumptuous as I may be, even to hope.'

'Ay, truly said, my friend,' said Crawford, 'you have been imprudent in your communications; and, since you refer to me, and there is a good stout grating across the parlour, I would advise you to trust to it, and let them

do the worst with their tongues. What, man ! the life of a King, and many thousands besides, is not to be weighed with the chance of two young things whispering in each other's ears for a minute !'

So saying, he dragged off Crèvecoeur, who followed very reluctantly, and cast many angry glances at the young Archer as he left the room.

In a moment after, the Countess Isabelle entered on the other side of the grate, and no sooner saw Quentin alone in the parlour, than she stopped short, and cast her eyes on the ground for the space of half a minute. ' Yet why should I be ungrateful ? ' she said, ' my friend—my preserver, I may almost say, so much have I been beset by treachery—my only faithful and constant friend ! '

As she spoke thus, she extended her hand to him through the grate, nay, suffered him to retain it, until he had covered it with kisses, not unmixed with tears. She only said : ' Durward, were we ever to meet again, I would not permit this folly.'

If it be considered that Quentin had guarded her through so many perils—that he had been, in truth, her only faithful and zealous protector, perhaps my fair readers will pardon the derogation.

But the Countess extricated her hand at length, and, stepping a pace back from the grate, asked Durward, in a very embarrassed tone, what boon he had to ask of her ? ' For that you have a request to make, I have learned from the old Scottish Lord, who came here but now with my cousin of Crèvecoeur. Let it be but reasonable,' she said, ' but such as poor Isabelle can grant with duty and honour uninfringed, and you cannot tax my slender powers too highly. But, oh ! do not speak hastily—do not say,' she added, looking around with timidity, ' aught that might, if overheard, do prejudice to us both ! '

' Fear not, noble lady,' said Quentin sorrowfully ; ' it is not *here* that I can forget the distance which fate has placed between us, or expose you to the censure of your proud kindred, as the object of the most devoted love to one, poorer and less powerful—not perhaps less noble than themselves. Let that pass like a dream of the night to all

but one bosom, where, dream as it is, it will fill up the room of all existing realities.'

'Hush! hush!' said Isabelle; 'for your own sake—for mine—be silent on such a theme. Tell me rather what it is you have to ask of me.'

'Forgiveness to one,' replied Quentin, 'who, for his own selfish views, has conducted himself as your enemy.'

'I trust I forgive all my enemies,' answered Isabelle; 'but, oh! Durward, through what scenes have your courage and presence of mind protected me! Yonder bloody hall—the good Bishop—I knew not till yesterday half the horrors I had unconsciously witnessed!'

'Do not think on them,' said Quentin, who saw the transient colour which had come to her cheek during their conference fast fading into the most deadly paleness. 'Do not look back, but look steadily forward. Hearken to me. King Louis deserves nothing better at your hand, of all others, than to be proclaimed the wily and insidious politician, which he really is. But to tax him as the author of a plan to throw you into the hands of De la Marck will at this moment produce perhaps the King's death or dethronement; and, at all events, the most bloody war between France and Burgundy which the two countries have ever been engaged in.'

'These evils shall not arrive for my sake, if they can be prevented,' said the Countess Isabelle; 'and indeed your slightest request were enough to make me forgo my revenge. Is it possible I would rather remember King Louis's injuries than your invaluable services? Yet how is this to be? When I am called before my Sovereign, the Duke of Burgundy, I must either stand silent, or speak the truth. The former would be contumacy; and to a false tale you will not desire me to train my tongue.'

'Surely not,' said Durward; 'but let your evidence concerning Louis be confined to what you yourself positively know to be truth. The assembled Council of Burgundy must esteem him innocent until direct and sufficient proof shall demonstrate his guilt. Now, what does not consist with your own certain knowledge should be proved by other evidence than your report from hearsay.'

'I think I understand you,' said the Countess Isabelle.

'I shall make my meaning plainer,' said Quentin; and was illustrating it accordingly by more than one instance when the convent-bell tolled.

'That,' said the Countess, 'is a signal that we must part—part for ever! But do not forget me, Durward; I shall never forget you—your faithful services—'

She could not speak more, but again extended her hand, which was again pressed to his lips; and I know not how it was, that, in endeavouring to withdraw her hand, the Countess came so close to the grating that Quentin was encouraged to press the adieu on her lips. The young lady did not chide him—perhaps there was no time; for Crèvecoeur and Crawford, who had been from some loophole eye-witnesses, if not ear-witnesses also, of what was passing, rushed into the apartment, the first in a towering passion, the latter laughing, and holding the Count back.

'To your chamber, young mistress—to your chamber!' exclaimed the Count to Isabelle, who, flinging down her veil, retired in all haste. 'And you, gentle sir, who are so malapert, the time will come when the interests of kings and kingdoms may not be connected with such as you are; and you shall then learn the penalty of your audacity in raising your beggarly eyes—'

'Hush! hush!—enough said—rein up—rein up,' said the old lord; 'and you, Quentin, I command you, be silent, and begone to your quarters. There is no such room for so much scorn neither, Sir Count of Crèvecoeur, that I must say now he is out of hearing. Quentin Durward is as much a gentleman as the King. He is as noble as myself, and I am chief of my name. Tush! tush! man, you must not speak to us of penalties.'

'My lord, my lord,' said Crèvecoeur impatiently, 'the insolence of these foreign mercenaries is proverbial, and should receive rather rebuke than encouragement from you, who are their leader.'

'My Lord Count,' answered Crawford, 'I have ordered my command for these fifty years, without advice either from Frenchman or Burgundian; and I intend to do so, under your favour, so long as I shall continue to hold it.'

'Well, well, my lord,' said Crèvecoeur, 'I meant you no disrespect; your nobleness, as well as your age, entitle

you to be privileged ; and for these young people, I am satisfied to overlook the past, since I shall take care that they never meet again.'

'Do not take that upon your salvation, Crèvecoeur,' said the old lord laughing ; 'mountains, it is said, may meet, and why not mortal creatures ? Yon kiss, Crèvecoeur, came tenderly off—methinks it was ominous.'

'You are striving again to disturb my patience,' said Crèvecoeur, 'but I shall not give you that advantage over me. Hark ! they toll the summons to the Castle—an awful meeting, of which God only can foretell the issue.'

'This issue I can foretell,' said the old Scottish lord, 'that if violence is to be offered to the person of the King, few as his friends are, and surrounded by his enemies, he shall neither fall alone nor unavenged ; and grieved I am that his own positive orders have prevented my taking measures to prepare for such an issue.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Investigation.

At the first toll of the bell, which was to summon the great nobles of Burgundy together in council, with the very few French peers who could be present on the occasion, Duke Charles, followed by a part of his train, entered the Hall of Herbert's Tower, in the Castle of Peronne. King Lottis, who had expected the visit, arose and made two steps towards the Duke, and then remained standing with an air of dignity, which he knew very well how to assume when he judged it necessary.

'I come,' said the Duke, 'to pray your Majesty to attend a high council, at which things of weight are to be deliberated upon concerning the welfare of France and Burgundy. You will presently meet them—that is, if such be your pleasure—'

'Nay, my fair cousin,' said the King, 'never strain courtesy so far as to entreat what you may so boldly command. To council, since such is your Grace's pleasure. We are somewhat shorn of our train,' he added, looking upon the small suite that arranged themselves to attend him, 'but you, cousin, must shine out for us both.'

Marshalled by Toison d'Or, chief of the heralds of Burgundy, the Princes left the Earl Herbert's Tower, and entered the castle-yard, which Louis observed was filled with the Duke's body-guard and men-at-arms. Crossing the court, they entered the Council-hall, which was in a much more modern part of the building than that of which Louis had been the tenant, and, though in disrepair, had been hastily arranged for the solemnity of a public council. Two chairs of state were erected under the same canopy, that for the King being raised two steps higher than the one which the Duke was to occupy; about twenty of the chief nobility sat, arranged in due order, on either hand of the chair of state; and thus, when both the Princes were seated, the person for whose trial, as it might be called, the council was summoned, held the highest place, and appeared to preside in it.

It was perhaps to get rid of this inconsistency, and the scruples which might have been inspired by it, that Duke Charles, having bowed slightly to the royal chair, bluntly opened the sitting with the following words:—

'My good vassals and councillors, it is not unknown to you what disturbances have arisen in our territories, both in our father's time and in our own, from the rebellion of vassals against superiors, and subjects against their princes. And lately we have had the most dreadful proof of the height to which these evils have arrived in our case, by the scandalous flight of the Countess Isabelle of Croye, and her aunt the Lady Hameline, to take refuge with a foreign power, thereby renouncing their fealty to us, and inferring the forfeiture of their fiefs; and in another more dreadful and deplorable instance, by the sacrilegious and bloody murder of our beloved brother and ally the Bishop of Liege, and the rebellion of that treacherous city. We have been informed that these sad events may be traced to the interference of a mighty neighbour, from whom, if good deeds could merit any return in kind, Burgundy could have expected nothing but the most sincere and devoted friendship. If this should prove truth,' said the Duke, setting his teeth, and pressing his heel against the ground, 'what consideration shall withhold us—the means being in our power—from taking such measures as

shall effectually, at the very source, close up the main spring from which these evils have yearly flowed on us ?'

The Duke had begun his speech with some calmness, but he elevated his voice at the conclusion ; and the last sentence was spoken in a tone which made all the counsellors tremble, and brought a transient fit of paleness across the King's cheek. He instantly recalled his courage, however, and addressed the council in his turn, in a tone evincing so much ease and composure, that the Duke, though he seemed desirous to interrupt or stop him, found no decent opportunity to do so.

' Nobles of France and of Burgundy,' he said, ' Knights of the Holy Spirit and of the Golden Fleece ! since a King must plead his cause as an accused person, he cannot desire more distinguished judges than the flower of nobleness and muster and pride of chivalry. Our fair cousin of Burgundy has but darkened the dispute between us, in so far as his courtesy has declined to state it in precise terms. I crave leave to speak more precisely. It is to Us, my lords—to Us, his liege lord, his kinsman, his ally—that unhappy circumstances, perverting our cousin's clear judgment and better nature, have induced him to apply the hateful charges of seducing his vassals from their allegiance, stirring up the people of Liege to revolt, and stimulating the outlawed William de la Marck to commit a most cruel and sacrilegious murder. Nobles of France and Burgundy, I might truly appeal to the circumstances in which I now stand, as being in themselves a complete contradiction of such an accusation ; for is it to be supposed that, having the sense of a rational being left me, I should have thrown myself unreservedly into the power of the Duke of Burgundy, while I was practising treachery against him, such as could not fail to be discovered ? I have no doubt that, amongst the perpetrators of those horrible treasons at Schonwaldt, villains have been busy with my name, but am I to be answerable, who has given them no right to use it ? If two silly women sought refuge at my Court, does it follow that they did so by my direction ? It will be found, when inquired into, that, since honour and chivalry forbade my sending them back prisoners to the Court of Burgundy that I came as nearly as possible

to the same point, by placing them in the hands of the venerable father in God, who is now a saint in Heaven.' Here Louis seemed much affected, and pressed his kerchief to his eyes. 'I say, therefore, the only circumstances which seem in my brother of Burgundy's hasty view of this subject, to argue unworthy suspicions against me, are such as can be explained on the fairest and most honourable motives; and I say, moreover, that no one particle of credible evidence can be brought to support the injurious charges which have induced my brother to alter his friendly looks towards one who came to him in full confidence of friendship—have caused him to turn his festive hall into a court of justice, and his hospitable apartments into a prison.'

'My lord, my lord,' said Charles, breaking in so soon as the King paused, 'for your being here at a time so unluckily coinciding with the execution of your projects, I can only account by supposing that those who make it their trade to impose on others do sometimes delude themselves. For what is to follow, let it depend on the event of this solemn inquiry. Bring hither the Countess Isabelle of Croye!'

The young lady was introduced, supported on the one side by the Countess of Crèvecœur and on the other by the Abbess of the Ursuline convent.

With much pain, and not without several interruptions, Isabelle confessed that, being absolutely determined against a match proposed to her by the Duke of Burgundy, she had indulged the hope of obtaining protection of the Court of France.

'And under protection of the French Monarch,' said Charles. 'Of that, doubtless, you were well assured?'

'I did indeed so think myself assured,' said the Countess Isabelle, 'otherwise I had not taken a step so decided. But my information concerning King Louis's intentions towards us was almost entirely derived from my unhappy aunt, the Lady Hameline, and her opinions were formed upon the assertions and insinuations of persons whom I have since discovered to be the vilest traitors, and most faithless wretches in the world.' She then stated, in brief terms, what she had since come to learn of the

treachery of Marthon, and of Hayraddin Maugrabin, and added that she ‘entertained no doubt that the elder Maugrabin, called Zamet, was capable of every species of treachery, as well as of assuming the character of an agent of Louis without authority.’

There was a pause while the Countess continued her story, which she prosecuted, though very briefly, from the time she left the territories of Burgundy, in company with her aunt, until the storming of Schonwaldt, and her final surrender to the Count of Crèvecœur. All remained mute after she had finished her brief and broken narrative, and the Duke of Burgundy bent his fierce dark eyes on the ground, like one who seeks for a pretext to indulge his passion, but finds none sufficiently plausible to justify himself in his own eyes.

‘I fancy, fair mistress, in this account of your wanderings, you have forgotten all mention of certain love-passages. So, ho ! blushing already ?—Certain knights of the forest, by whom your quiet was for a time interrupted. Well, that incident has come to our ear, and something we may presently form out of it. Tell me, King Louis, were it not well before this vagrant Helen of Troy, or of Croye, set more kings by the ears—were it not well to carve out a fitting match for her ?’

King Louis, though conscious what ungrateful proposal was likely to be made next, gave a calm and silent assent to what Charles said ; but the Countess herself was restored to courage by the very extremity of her situation. She quitted the arm of the Countess of Crèvecœur, on which she had hitherto leaned, came forward timidly, yet with an air of dignity, and, kneeling before the Duke’s throne, thus addressed him : ‘Noble Duke of Burgundy, and my liege Lord, I acknowledge my fault in having withdrawn myself from your dominions without your gracious permission, and will most humbly acquiesce in any penalty you are pleased to impose. I place my lands and castles at your rightful disposal, and pray you only of your own bounty, and for the sake of my father’s memory, to allow the last of the line of Croye, out of her large estate, such a moderate maintenance as may find her admission into a convent for the remainder of her life.’

'What think you, Sire, of the young person's petition to us?' said the Duke, addressing Louis.

'As of a holy and humble motion,' said the King, 'which doubtless comes from that grace which ought not to be resisted or withheld.'

'The humble and lowly shall be exalted,' said Charles. 'Arise, Countess Isabelle; we mean better for you than you have devised for yourself. We mean neither to sequester your estates nor to abase your honours, but, on the contrary, shall add largely to both.'

'Alas! my lord,' said the Countess, continuing on her knees, 'it is even that well-meant goodness which I fear still more than your Grace's displeasure, since it compels me—'

'Saint George of Burgundy!' said Duke Charles, 'is our will to be thwarted, and our commands disputed, at every turn? Up, I say, minion, and withdraw for the present; when we have time to think of you we shall so order matters that you will either obey us, or do worse.'

Quentin Durward was now summoned to appear, and presented himself before the King and Duke with that freedom which becomes a youth at once well-born and well-nurtured. His uncle had furnished him with the arms and dress of an Archer of the Scottish Guard, and his complexion, mien, and air suited in an uncommon degree his splendid appearance. His extreme youth, too, prepossessed the councillors in his favour, the rather that no one could easily believe that the sagacious Louis would have chosen so very young a person to become the confidant of political intrigues. At the command of the Duke, sanctioned by that of Louis, Quentin commenced an account of his journey with the Ladies of Croye to the neighbourhood of Liege, premitting a statement of King Louis's instructions, which were that he should escort them safely to the castle of the Bishop.

'And you obeyed my orders accordingly?' said the King.

'I did, Sire,' replied the Scot.

'You omit a circumstance,' said the Duke. 'You were set upon in the forest by two wandering knights.'

'It does not become me to remember or to proclaim such an incident,' said the youth, blushing ingenuously.

'But it does not become *me* to forget it,' said the Duke of Orleans. 'This youth discharged his commission manfully, and maintained his trust in a manner that I shall long remember. Come to my apartment, Archer, when this matter is over, and you will find I have not forgotten your brave bearing.'

'And come to mine,' said Dunois. 'I have a helmet for you, since I think I owe you one.' Quentin bowed low to both, and the examination was resumed. At the command of Duke Charles, he produced the written instructions which he had received for the direction of his journey.

'Did you follow these instructions literally, soldier?' said the Duke.

'No, if it please your Grace,' replied Quentin. 'They directed me to cross the Maes near Namur; whereas I kept the left bank, as being the safer road to Liège.'

'And wherefore that alteration?' said the Duke.

'Because I began to suspect the fidelity of my guide,' answered Quentin.

'Now mark the questions I have next to ask you,' said the Duke. 'Reply truly to them, and fear nothing from the resentment of any one. But if you palter or double in your answers, I shall have you hung alive in an iron chain from the steeple of the market-house, where you shall wish for death for many an hour ere he come to relieve you!'

There was a deep silence. At length, having given the youth time, as he thought, to consider the circumstances in which he was placed, the Duke demanded to know of Durward who his guide was, by whom supplied, and wherefore he had been led to entertain suspicion of him? To the first of these questions, Quentin Durward answered by naming Hayraddin Maugrabin, the Bohemian; to the second, that the guide had been recommended by Tristan l'Hermite; and in reply to the third point, he mentioned what had happened in the Franciscan convent, near Namur; how the Bohemian had been expelled from the holy house; and how he had dogged him to a rendezvous with one of William de la Marck's *lanzknechts*, where

he overheard them arrange a plan for surprising the ladies who were under his protection.

'Now, hark,' said the Duke, 'and once more remember your life depends on your veracity, did these villains mention their having this King's—I mean this very King Louis of France's authority, for their scheme of surprising the escort, and carrying away the ladies?'

'If such infamous fellows had said so,' replied Quentin, 'I know not how I should have believed them, having the word of the King himself to place in opposition to theirs.'

Louis, who had listened hitherto with most earnest attention, could not help drawing his breath deeply when he heard Durward's answer, in the manner of one from whose bosom a heavy weight has been at once removed. The Duke again looked disconcerted and moody; and, returning to the charge, questioned Quentin still more closely, whether he did not understand, from these men's private conversation, that the plots which they meditated had King Louis's sanction?

'I repeat that I heard nothing which could authorize me to say so,' answered the young man, 'and if I had heard such men make such an assertion, I again say that I would not have given their testimony weight against the instructions of the King himself.'

'You are a faithful messenger,' said the Duke, with a sneer; 'and I venture to say that, in obeying the King's instructions, you have disappointed his expectations in a manner that you might have smarted for, but that subsequent events have made your bull-headed fidelity seem like good service.'

'I understand you not, my lord,' said Quentin Durward; 'all I know is, that my master, King Louis, sent me to protect these ladies, and that I did so accordingly, to the extent of my ability, both in the journey to Schonwaldt, and through the subsequent scenes which took place. I understood the instructions of the King to be honourable, and I executed them honourably; had they been of a different tenor, they would not have suited one of my name or nation.'

Charles said, who, however disappointed at the tenor of Durward's reply, was not unjust enough to blame him for

his boldness : ‘ But hark you, Archer, what instructions were those which made you parade the streets of Liege at the head of those mutineers, who afterwards cruelly murdered their temporal Prince and spiritual Father ? And what harangue was it which you made after that murder was committed, in which you took upon you, as agent for Louis, to assume authority among the villains who had just perpetrated so great a crime ? ’

‘ My lord,’ said Quentin, ‘ there are many who could testify that I assumed not the character of an envoy of France in the town of Liege, but had it fixed upon me by the obstinate clamours of the people themselves. It is, no doubt, true that I did, in the extremity of danger, avail myself of the influence which my imputed character gave me, to save the Countess Isabelle, to protect my own life, and, so far as I could, to rein in the humour for slaughter which had already broken out in so dreadful an instance. I repeat that I had no commission of any kind from the King of France, respecting the people of Liege, far less instructions to instigate them to mutiny ; and that, finally, when I did avail myself of that imputed character, it was as if I had snatched up a shield to protect myself in a moment of emergency, and used it, as I should surely have done, for the defence of myself and others.’

‘ And therein my young companion and prisoner,’ said Crèvecoeur, unable any more to remain silent, ‘ acted with equal spirit and good sense ; and his doing so cannot be justly imputed as blame to King Louis.’

There was a murmur of assent among the surrounding nobility which sounded joyfully in the ears of King Louis, whilst it gave no little offence to Charles. He rolled his eyes angrily around ; and the sentiments so generally expressed by so many of his highest vassals and wisest counsellors would not perhaps have prevented his giving way to his violent and despotic temper, had not Des Comines, who foresaw the danger, prevented it, by suddenly announcing a herald from the city of Liege.

‘ A herald from weavers ? ’ exclaimed the Duke ; ‘ admit him instantly. By Our Lady, I shall learn from this same herald something further of his employers’ hopes and pro-

jects than this young French-Scottish man-at-arms seems desirous to tell me !'

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Herald.

THE herald, who was now introduced into the presence of the monarchs, was dressed in a tabard, or coat, embroidered with the arms of his master, in which the Boar's head made a distinguished appearance.

'Who are you, in the devil's name?' was the greeting with which Charles the Bold received this singular envoy.

'I am Rouge Sanglier,' answered the herald, 'the officer-at-arms of William de la Marck, by the grace of God, and the election of the Chapter, Prince Bishop of Liege.'

'Ha !' exclaimed Charles; but, as if subduing his own passion, he made a sign to him to proceed.

'And, in right of his wife, the Honourable Countess Hameline of Croye, Count of Croye, and Lord of Bracquemont.'

The utter astonishment of Duke Charles at the extremity of boldness with which these titles were announced in his presence seemed to strike him dumb; and the herald, therefore, proceeded boldly and unabashed in the delivery of his message. 'In the name of the Prince Bishop of Liege and Count of Croye, I am to require of you, Duke Charles, to desist from those pretensions and encroachments which you have made on the free and imperial city of Liege, by connivance with the late Louis of Bourbon, unworthy Bishop thereof.'

'Ha !' exclaimed the Duke.

'Also to rebuild the breaches in their walls, and restore the fortifications which you tyrannically dismantled; and to acknowledge my master, William de la Marck, as Prince Bishop, lawfully elected in a free Chapter of Canons.'

'Have you finished?' said the Duke.

'Not yet,' replied the envoy; 'I am further to require your Grace, on the part of the said right noble and venerable Prince, Bishop, and Count, that you do presently withdraw the garrison from the Castle of Bracquemont

belonging to the Earldom of Croye, which has been placed there, whether in your own most gracious name, or in that of Isabelle, calling herself Countess of Croye; or any other until it shall be decided by the Imperial Diet, whether the fiefs in the question shall not pertain to the sister of the late Count, my most gracious Lady Hameline, rather than to his daughter.'

'Your master is most learned,' replied the Duke.

'Yet,' continued the herald, 'the noble and venerable Prince and Count will be disposed, all other disputes betwixt Burgundy and Liege being settled, to fix upon the Lady Isabelle such an appanage as may become her quality.'

'He is generous and considerate,' said the Duke, in the same tone.

'One word more,' answered Rouge Sanglier, 'from my noble and venerable lord aforesaid, respecting his worthy and trusty ally, the Most Christian King——'

'Ha!' exclaimed the Duke, starting, and in a fiercer tone than he had yet used.

'Which Most Christian King's royal person it is rumoured that you, Charles of Burgundy, have placed under restraint, contrary to your duty as a vassal of the Crown of France, and to the faith observed among Christian Sovereigns. For which reason, my said noble and venerable master, by my mouth, charges you to put his Royal and Most Christian ally forthwith at freedom, or to receive the defiance which I am authorized to pronounce to you.'

'Have you yet done?' said the Duke.

'I have,' answered the herald, 'and await your Grace's answer, trusting it may be such as will save the effusion of Christian blood.'

'Now, by Saint George of Burgundy,' said the Duke; but ere he could proceed further, Louis arose, and struck in with a tone of so much dignity and authority, that Charles could not interrupt him.

'Under your favour, fair cousin of Burgundy,' said the King; 'we ourselves crave priority of voice in replying to this insolent fellow. Sirrah herald, carry back notice to the perjured outlaw and murderer, William de la Marck, that the King of France will be presently before Liege,

for the purpose of punishing the sacrilegious murderer of his late beloved kinsman, Louis of Bourbon; and that he proposes to gibbet De la Marck alive, for the insolence of terming himself his ally, and putting his royal name into the mouth of one of his own base messengers.'

'Add whatever else on my part,' said Charles, 'which it may not misbecome a prince to send to a common thief and murderer. And begone! Yet stay. Never herald went from the Court of Burgundy without having cause to cry, Largesse! Let him be scourged till the bones are laid bare!'

'By the rood!' said King Louis, 'since the ass has put on the boar's hide, I would set the dogs on him to bait him out of it!'

'Right, right!' exclaimed Duke Charles, the fancy exactly chiming in with his humour at the moment; 'it shall be done! Uncouple the hounds! We will course him from the door of the Castle to the east gate.'

The Rouge Sanglier showed excellent sport; for, winged with terror, and having half a score of fierce boar-hounds hard at his haunches, he flew like the very wind, and had he not been encumbered with his herald's coat, he might fairly have escaped dog-free; he also doubled once or twice, in a manner much approved of by the spectators. None of these—nay, not even Charles himself—was so delighted with the sport as King Louis, who, partly from political considerations, and partly as being naturally pleased with the sight of human suffering when ludicrously exhibited, laughed till the tears ran from his eyes, and in his ecstasies of rapture caught hold of the Duke's cloak, as if to support himself; whilst the Duke, no less delighted, flung his arm around the King's shoulder, making thus an exhibition of confidential sympathy and familiarity very much at variance with the terms on which they had so lately stood together.

At length the speed of the pseudo-herald could save him no longer from the fangs of his pursuers; they seized him, pulled him down, and would probably soon have throttled him, had not the Duke called out: 'Take them off him! He has shown so good a course that we shall not have him dispatched.'

At this moment Oliver le Dain, gliding behind King Louis, whispered into his ear: 'It is the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin. It were not well he should come to speech of the Duke.'

'He must die,' answered Louis, in the same tone; 'dead men tell no tales.'

One instant afterwards, Tristan l'Hermite, to whom Oliver had given the hint, stepped forward before the King, and the Duke, and said, in his blunt manner: 'So please your Majesty and your Grace, this piece of game is mine, and I claim him. He is marked with my stamp; the *fleur-de-lys* is branded on his shoulder as all men may see. He is a known villain, and has slain the King's subjects, robbed churches, slain deer in the royal parks——'

'Enough, enough,' said Duke Charles; 'he is my royal cousin's property by many a good title. What will your Majesty do with him?'

'If he is left to my disposal,' said the King, 'I shall at least give him one lesson in the science of heraldry, in which he is so ignorant—only explain to him practically, the meaning of a cross *potence*, with a noose dangling proper.'

'Not as to be by him borne, but as to bear him. Let him take the degrees under your gossip Tristan; he is a deep professor in such mysteries. And now for once, without finesse and doubling, will you make good your promise, and go with me to punish this murdering La Marck and the Liegeois?'

'I will march against them,' said Louis, 'with the Ban, and Arrière-Ban of France, and the Oriflamme displayed.'

'Nay, nay,' said the Duke, 'that is more than is needful, or may be advisable. The presence of your Scottish Guard, and two hundred choice lances, will serve to show that you are a free agent. A large army might——'

'Make me so in effect, you would say, my fair cousin?' said the King. 'Well, you shall dictate the numbers of my attendants.'

'And to put this fair cause of mischief out of the way, you will agree to the Countess Isabelle of Croye wedding with the Duke of Orleans?'

'Fair cousin,' said the King, 'you drive my courtesy

to extremity. The Duke is the betrothed bridegroom of my daughter Joan. Be generous—yield up this matter, and let us speak rather of the towns on the Somme.'

'My Council will talk to your Majesty of these,' said Charles; 'I myself have less at heart the acquisition of territory than the redress of injuries. You have tampered with my vassals, and your royal pleasure must needs dispose of the hand of a Ward of Burgundy. Your Majesty must bestow it within the pale of your own royal family, since you have meddled with it—otherwise, our conference breaks off.'

'Were I to say I did this willingly,' said the King, 'no one would believe me; therefore do you, my fair cousin, judge of the extent of my wish to oblige you when I say, most reluctantly, that the parties consenting, and a dispensation from the Pope being obtained, my own objections shall be no bar to this match which you propose.'

'All besides can be easily settled by our ministers,' said the Duke, 'and we are once more cousins and friends.'

'May Heaven be praised!' said Louis, 'who, holding in His hand the hearts of princes, doth mercifully incline them to peace and clemency, and prevent the effusion of human blood. Oliver,' he added apart to that favourite, 'tell Tristan to be speedy in dealing with yonder runagate Bohemian.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A Prize for Honour.

KING Louis, who had omitted no opportunity to cultivate the returning interest which that circumstance had given him in the Duke's opinion, had been engaged in consulting him upon the number and quality of the troops, by whom he was to be attended in their joint expedition against Liege. He plainly saw the wish of Charles was to call into his camp such Frenchmen as, from their small number and high quality, might be considered rather as hostages than as auxiliaries; but, observant of Crèvecoeur's advice, he assented as readily to whatever the Duke proposed, as if it had arisen from the free impulse of his own mind.

No sooner were the necessary expresses dispatched to summon up the forces selected to act as auxiliaries, than Louis was called upon to give public consent to the espousals of the Duke of Orleans and Isabelle of Croye. The King complied with a heavy sigh, and presently after urged a slight expostulation, founded upon the necessity of observing the wishes of the Duke himself.

'These have not been neglected,' said the Duke of Burgundy: 'Crèveceur has communicated with Monsieur d'Orleans, and finds him (strange to say) so dead to the honour of wedding a royal bride, that he acceded to the proposal of marrying the Countess of Croye as the kindest proposal which a father could have made to him.'

'He is the more ungracious and thankless,' said Louis; 'but the whole shall be as you, my cousin, will; if you can bring it about with consent of the parties themselves.'

'Fear not that,' said the Duke; and accordingly, not many minutes after the affair had been proposed, the Duke of Orleans and the Countess of Croye, the latter attended, as on the preceding occasion, by the Countess of Crèvecoeur and the Abbess of the Ursulines, were summoned to the presence of the Princes, and heard from the mouth of Charles of Burgundy that the union of their hands was designed by the wisdom of both Princes, to confirm the perpetual alliance betwixt France and Burgundy.

The Duke of Orleans had much difficulty in suppressing the joy which he felt upon the proposal, and which delicacy rendered improper in the presence of Louis; and it required his habitual awe of that monarch to enable him to rein in his delight, so much as merely to reply, 'that his duty compelled him to place his choice at the disposal of his Sovereign.'

'Fair cousin of Orleans,' said Louis, with sullen gravity, 'it is needless for me to remind you that my sense of your merits had led me to propose for you a match into my own family. But, since my cousin of Burgundy thinks that the disposing of your hand otherwise is the surest pledge of amity between his dominions and mine, I love both too well not to sacrifice to them my own hopes and wishes.'

The Duke of Orleans threw himself on his knees, and

kissed—and, for once, with sincerity of attachment—the hand which the King, with averted countenance, extended to him. In fact, he, as well as most present, saw, in the unwilling acquiescence of this accomplished dissembler, who, even with that very purpose, had suffered his reluctance to be visible, a King relinquishing his favourite project, and subjugating his paternal feelings to the necessities of state and interest of his country. Even Burgundy was moved, and Orleans' heart smote him for the joy which he involuntarily felt on being freed from his engagement with the Princess Joan.

Charles next turned to the young Countess, and bluntly announced the proposed match to her, as a matter which neither admitted delay nor hesitation ; adding, at the same time, that it was but a too favourable consequence of her intractability on a former occasion.

'My Lord Duke and Sovereign,' said Isabelle, summoning up all her courage, 'I observe your Grace's commands, and submit to them.'

'Enough, enough,' said the Duke, interrupting her, 'we shall arrange the rest. Your Majesty,' he continued, addressing King Louis, 'has had a boar's hunt in the morning, what say you to rousing a wolf in the afternoon ?'

The young Countess saw the necessity of decision. 'Your Grace mistakes my meaning,' she said, speaking, though timidly, yet loudly, and decidedly enough to compel the Duke's attention, which, from some consciousness, he would otherwise have willingly denied to her. 'My submission,' she said, 'only respected those lands and estates which your Grace's ancestors gave to mine, and which I resign to the House of Burgundy, if my Sovereign thinks my disobedience in this matter renders me unworthy to hold them.'

'Ha ! Saint George !' said the Duke, stamping furiously on the ground, 'does the fool know in what presence she is—and to whom she speaks ?'

'My lord,' she replied, still undismayed, 'I am before my Suzerain, and, I trust, a just one. If you deprive me of my lands, you take away all that your ancestors' generosity gave, and you break the only bonds which attach us

together. You gave not this poor and persecuted form, still less the spirit which animates me. And these it is my purpose to dedicate to Heaven in the convent of the Ursulines, under the guidance of this Holy Mother Abbess.'

The rage and astonishment of the Duke can hardly be conceived. 'Will the Holy Mother receive you without an appanage?' he said, in a voice of scorn.

'If she does her convent, in the first instance, so much wrong,' said the Lady Isabelle, 'I trust there is charity enough among the noble friends of my house to make up some support for the orphan of Croye.'

'It is false!' said the Duke; 'it is a base pretext to cover some secret and unworthy passion. My Lord of Orleans, she shall be yours, if I drag her to the altar with my own hands!'

The Countess of Crèvecœur, a high-spirited woman, and confident in her husband's merits and his favour with the Duke, could keep silent no longer. 'My lord,' she said, 'your passions transport you into language utterly unworthy. The hand of no gentlewoman can be disposed of by force.'

'And it is no part of the duty of a Christian Prince,' added the Abbess, 'to thwart the wishes of a pious soul, who is desirous to become the bride of Heaven.'

'Neither can my cousin of Orleans,' said Dunois, 'with honour accept a proposal to which the lady has thus publicly stated her objections.'

'If I were permitted,' said Orleans, on whose facile mind Isabelle's beauty had made a deep impression, 'some time to endeavour to place my pretensions before the Countess in a more favourable light—'

'My lord,' said Isabelle, 'it were to no purpose; my mind is made up to decline this alliance, though far above my deserts.'

'Nor have I time,' said the Duke, 'to wait till these whimsies are changed with the next change of the moon. Monseigneur d'Orleans, she shall learn within this hour that obedience becomes a matter of necessity.'

'Not in my behalf, Sire,' answered the Prince, who felt that he could not, with any show of honour, avail himself

of the Duke's obstinate disposition; 'to have been once openly and positively refused is enough for a son of France. He cannot prosecute his addresses further.'

The Duke darted one furious glance at Orleans, another at Louis.

'Write,' he said to the Secretary, 'our doom of forfeiture and imprisonment against this disobedient and insolent minion!'

There was a general murmur.

'My Lord Duke,' said the Count of Crèvecoeur, taking the word for the rest, 'this must be better thought on. We, your faithful vassals, cannot suffer such a dishonour to the nobility and chivalry of Burgundy. If the Countess has done amiss, let her be punished—but in the manner that becomes her rank, and ours, who stand connected with her house by blood and alliance.'

The Duke paused a moment, and looked full at his counsellor with the stare of a bull, which deliberates with himself whether to obey, or to rush on his driver and toss him into the air.

Prudence, however, prevailed over fury. He saw the sentiment was general in his council, was afraid of the advantages which Louis might derive from seeing dissension among his vassals, and probably felt ashamed of his own dishonourable proposal.

'You are right,' he said, 'Crèvecoeur, and I spoke hastily. Her fate shall be determined according to the rules of chivalry. Her flight to Liege has given the signal for the Bishop's murder. He that best avenges that deed, and brings us the head of the Wild Boar of Ardennes, shall claim her hand of us; and if she denies his right, we can at least grant him her fiefs, leaving it to his generosity to allow her what means he will to retire into a convent.'

'Nay!' said the Countess. 'Think, I am the daughter of your father's old, valiant, and faithful servant. Would you hold me out as a prize to the best sword-player?'

'Your ancestress,' said the Duke, 'was won at a tourney; you shall be fought for in real *mélée*. Only thus far, for Count Reinold's sake, the successful prizer shall be a gentleman, of unimpeached birth, and unstained bearings; but, be he such he shall have at least the proffer of your

hand. I swear it, by Saint George, by my ducal crown, and by the Order that I wear ! Ha ! Messires,' he added, turning to the nobles present, 'this at least is, I think, in conformity with the rules of chivalry ?'

Isabelle's remonstrances were drowned in a general and jubilant assent. The Duke was gratified by the general applause, and his temper began to flow more smoothly.

'I trust,' said Dunois, 'that the chivalry of France are not excluded from this fair contest ?'

'Heaven forbid ! brave Dunois,' answered the Duke, 'but,' he added, 'though there be no fault in the Lady Isabelle wedding a Frenchman, it will be necessary that the Count of Croye must become a subject of Burgundy.'

'Enough, enough,' said Dunois, 'my crest may never be surmounted by the coronet of Croye—I will live and die French. But yet, though I should lose the lands, I will strike a blow for the lady.'

Le Balafré dared not speak aloud in such a presence, but he muttered to himself :

'Now, Saunders Souplejaw, hold your own ! you always said the fortune of our house was to be won by marriage, and never had you such a chance to keep your word with us.'

'No one thinks of me,' said Le Glorieux, 'who am sure to carry off the prize from all of you.'

'Right, my sapient friend,' said Louis ; 'when a woman is in the case, the greatest fool is ever the first in favour.'

While the princes and their nobles thus jested over her fate, the Abbess and the Countess of Crèvecoeur endeavoured in vain to console Isabelle, who had withdrawn with them from the council-presence. The former assured her that the Holy Virgin would frown on every attempt to withdraw a true votaress from the shrine of Saint Ursula ; while the Countess of Crèvecoeur whispered more temporal consolation, that no true knight, who might succeed in the enterprise proposed, would avail himself, against her inclinations, of the Duke's award ; and that perhaps the successful competitor might prove one who should find such favour in her eyes as to reconcile her to obedience. Love, like despair, catches at straws ; and, faint and vague as was the hope which this insinuation conveyed, the tears

of the Countess Isabelle flowed more placidly while she dwelt upon it.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Sally.

Few days had passed ere the auxiliary forces which the Duke had required Louis to bring up had appeared; and he comforted himself that their numbers were sufficient to protect his person against violence, although too limited to cope, had such been his purpose, with the large army of Burgundy. Although he was sensible to the indignity of serving with his noblest peers under the banners of his own vassal, and against the people whose cause he had abetted, he did not allow these circumstances to embarrass him in the meantime, trusting that a future day would bring him amends. 'For chance,' said he to his trusty Oliver, 'may indeed gain one hit, but it is patience and wisdom which win the game at last.'

With such sentiments, upon a beautiful day in the latter end of harvest, the King mounted his horse; and, surrounded by his guards and his chivalry, sallied from under the Gothic gateway of Peronne, to join the Burgundian army, which commenced at the same time its march against Liege.

Most of the ladies of distinction who were in the place attended, dressed in their best array, upon the battlements and defences of the gate, to see the gallant show of the warriors setting forth on the expedition. Thither had the Countess Crèvecoeur brought the Countess Isabelle. The latter attended very reluctantly; but the peremptory order of Charles had been that she who was to bestow the palm in the tourney should be visible to the knights who were about to enter the lists.

As they thronged out from under the arch, many a pennon and shield was to be seen, graced with fresh devices, expressive of the bearer's devoted resolution to become a competitor for a prize so fair. Each knight, too, it may be presumed, assumed his most gallant seat in the saddle, as he passed for a moment under the view of the fair bevy

of dames and damsels, who encouraged their valour by their smiles, and the waving of kerchiefs and of veils. The Archer-Guard, selected from the flower of the Scottish nation, drew general applause, from the gallantry and splendour of their appearance.

And there was one among these strangers, who ventured on a demonstration of acquaintance with the Lady Isabelle, which had not been attempted even by the most noble of the French nobility. It was Quentin Durward, who, as he passed the ladies in his rank, presented to the Countess of Croye, on the point of his lance, the letter of her aunt.

'Now, by my honour,' said the Count of Crèvecœur, 'that is over insolent!'

'You make words of nothing,' said Isabelle, blushing with shame, and partly with resentment; 'it is a letter from my unfortunate aunt. She writes cheerfully, though her situation must be dreadful.'

'Let us hear, let us hear what says the Boar's bride,' said Crèvecœur.

The Countess Isabelle read the letter, in which her aunt seemed determined to make the best of a bad bargain, and to console herself for the haste of her nuptials, by the happiness of being wedded to one of the bravest men of the age, who had just acquired a princedom by his valour. She implored her niece not to judge of her William (as she called him) by the report of others, but to wait till she knew him personally. More there was to the same purpose; and the whole concluded with the hope and request that Isabelle would, by means of the bearer, endeavour her escape from the tyrant of Burgundy, and come to her loving kinswoman's Court of Liege.

But while Isabelle read her aunt's epistle to her friends, it must be observed that she did not think it necessary to recite a certain postscript, in which the Countess Hameline informed her niece that she had laid aside for the present a surcoat which she was working for her husband, bearing the arms of Croye and La Marck, because her William had determined, for purposes of policy, in the first action to have others dressed in his coat-armour, and himself to assume the arms of Dunois. There was also a slip of paper in another hand, the contents of which the Countess did not

think it necessary to mention, being simply these words : ' If you hear not of me soon, and that by the trumpet of Fame, conclude me dead, but not unworthy.'

A thought, hitherto repelled as wildly incredible, now glanced with double keenness through Isabelle's soul. As female wit seldom fails in the contrivance of means, she so ordered it, that ere the troops were fully on march, Quentin Durward received from an unknown hand the billet of Lady Hameline, marked with three crosses opposite to the postscript, and having these words subjoined : ' He who feared not the arms of Dunois when on the breast of their gallant owner, cannot dread them when displayed on that of a tyrant and murderer.' A thousand times was this intimation pressed to the bosom of the young Scot ! for it marshalled him on the path where both Honour and Love held out the reward, and possessed him with a secret unknown to others, by which to distinguish him whose death could alone give life to his hopes.

After pondering on the matter, Durward formed the resolution that he would not communicate the intelligence save personally, and to both the Princes while together. He determined, therefore, to watch for an opportunity of revealing the secret whilst Louis and Charles were met, which, as they were not particularly fond of the constraint imposed by each other's society, was not likely soon to occur.

At length, without experiencing any serious opposition, the army arrived in the rich valley of the Maes, and before the large and populous city of Liege. The Castle of Schonwaldt they found had been totally destroyed, and learned that William de la Marck had withdrawn his whole forces into the city, and was determined to avoid the encounter of the chivalry of France and Burgundy in the open field. But the invaders were not long of experiencing the danger which must always exist in attacking a large town, however open, if the inhabitants are disposed to defend it desperately.

A part of the Burgundian vanguard, conceiving that, from the dismantled and breached state of the walls, they had nothing to do but to march into Liege at their ease, entered one of the suburbs with the shouts of ' Burgundy,

Burgundy ! Kill, kill—all is ours ! Remember Louis of Bourbon !' But as they marched in disorder through the narrow streets, and were partly dispersed for the purpose of pillage, a large body of the inhabitants issued suddenly from the town, fell furiously upon them, and made considerable slaughter. De la Marck even availed himself of the breaches in the walls, which permitted the defenders to issue out at different points, and, by taking separate routes into the contested suburb, to attack, in the front, flank, and rear, at once, the assailants, who, stunned by the furious, unexpected, and multiplied nature of the resistance offered, could hardly stand to their arms. The evening, which began to close, added to their confusion.

By dint of great exertion, a small country villa was secured for the accommodation of the Duke and his immediate attendants.

A little to the left of this villa, lay another pleasure-house, surrounded by a garden and courtyard. In this the King of France established his own headquarters. He did not himself pretend to be a soldier, further than natural indifference to danger and much sagacity qualified him to be called such ; but he was always careful to employ the most skilful in that profession, and reposed in them the confidence they merited.

Dunois and Crawford, assisted by several old officers and soldiers, amongst whom Le Balafré was conspicuous for his diligence, contrived, by breaking down walls, making openings through hedges, filling up ditches, and the like, to facilitate the communication of the troops with each other, and the orderly combination of the whole in case of necessity.

Meanwhile, the King judged it proper to go without further ceremony to the quarters of the Duke of Burgundy, to ascertain what was to be the order of proceeding, and what co-operation was expected from him. His presence occasioned a sort of council of war to be held, of which Charles might not otherwise have dreamed.

It was then that Quentin Durward prayed earnestly to be admitted, as having something of importance to deliver to the two Princes. This was obtained without much difficulty, and great was the astonishment of Louis when he

heard him calmly and distinctly relate the purpose of William de la Marck, to make a sally upon the camp of the besiegers, under the dress and banners of the French. Louis would probably have been much better pleased to have had such important news communicated in private ; but as the whole story had been publicly told in the presence of the Duke of Burgundy, he only observed, ‘that, whether true or false, such a report concerned them most materially.’

‘Not a whit ! not a whit !’ said the Duke carelessly. ‘Had there been such a purpose as this young man announces, it had not been communicated to me by an Archer of the Scottish Guard.’

‘However that may be,’ answered Louis, ‘I pray you, fair cousin, you and your captains, to attend, that to prevent the unpleasing consequences of such an attack, should it be made unexpectedly, I will cause my soldiers to wear white scarfs over their armour. Dunois, see it given out on the instant—that is,’ he added, ‘if our brother and general approves of it.’

‘I see no objection,’ replied the Duke, ‘if the chivalry of France are willing to run the risk of having the name of Knights of the Smock-sleeve bestowed on them in future.’

‘It would be a right well adapted title, friend Charles,’ said Le Glorieux, ‘considering that a woman is the reward of the most valiant.’

‘Well spoken, Sagacity,’ said Louis. ‘Cousin, good night, I will go arm me. By the way, what if I win the Countess with mine own hand ?’

‘Your Majesty,’ said the Duke, in an altered tone of voice, ‘must then become a true Fleming.’

‘I cannot,’ answered Louis, in a tone of the most sincere confidence, ‘be more so than I am already, could I but bring you, my dear cousin, to believe it.’

The Duke only replied by wishing the King good night, in a tone resembling the snort of a shy horse, starting from the caress of the rider when he is about to mount, and is soothing him to stand still.

‘I could pardon all his duplicity,’ said the Duke to Crèvecœur, ‘but cannot forgive his supposing me capable

of the gross folly of being duped by his professions.'

Louis, too, had his confidences with Oliver le Dain when he returned to his own quarters. 'This Scot,' he said, 'is such a mixture of shrewdness and simplicity that I know not what to make of him. Think of his unpardonable folly in bringing out honest De la Marck's plan of a sally before the face of Burgundy, Crèvecœur, and all of them, instead of rounding it in my ear, and giving me at least the choice of abetting or defeating it!'

'It is better as it is, Sire,' said Oliver; 'there are many in your present train who would scruple to assail Burgundy undefied, or to ally themselves with De la Marck.'

'You are right, Oliver. Such fools there are in the world, and we have no time to reconcile their scruples by a little dose of self-interest. We must be true men, Oliver, and good allies of Burgundy, for this night at least—time may give us a chance of a better game.'

CHAPTER XXX.

The Prize.

A DEAD silence soon reigned over that great host which lay before Liege. Sleep fell on almost all, excepting those who kept a faint and weary watch by the lodgings of the King and the Duke. The dangers and hopes of the morrow—even the schemes of glory which many of the young nobility had founded upon the splendid prize held out to him who should avenge the murdered Bishop of Liege—glided from their recollection as they lay stupefied with fatigue and sleep. But not so with Quentin Durward. The knowledge that he alone was possessed of the means of distinguishing La Marck in the contest—the recollection by whom that information had been communicated, and the fair augury which might be drawn from her conveying it to him—the thought that his fortune had brought him to a most perilous and doubtful crisis indeed, but one where there was still, at least, a chance of his coming off triumphant, banished every desire to sleep, and strung his nerves with vigour, which defied fatigue.

Posted on the extreme point between the French quar-

ters and the town he sharpened his eye to penetrate the mass which lay before him, and excited his ears to catch the slightest sounds which might announce any commotion in the beleaguered city. But its huge clocks had successively knelled three hours after midnight, and all continued still and silent as the grave.

At length, and just when Quentin began to think the attack would be deferred till daybreak, and joyfully recollect that there would be then light enough to descry the Bar Sinister across the Fleur-de-lis of Orleans, he thought he heard in the city a humming murmur. He listened—the noise continued; but it was of a character so undistinguished by any peculiar or precise sound, that it might be the murmur of a wind rising among the boughs of a distant grove, or perhaps some stream swollen by the late rain. Quentin was prevented by these considerations from instantly giving the alarm, which, if done carelessly, would have been a heavy offence.

But when the noise rose louder, and seemed pouring at the same time towards his own post, and towards the suburb, he deemed it his duty to fall back as silently as possible, and call his uncle, who commanded the small body of Archers destined to his support. All were on their feet in a moment and with as little noise as possible. In less than a second, Lord Crawford was at their head, and, dispatching an archer to alarm the King and his household, drew back his little party to some distance behind their watchfire, that they might not be seen by its light. The rushing sound, which had approached them more nearly, seemed suddenly to have ceased; but they still heard distinctly the more distant heavy tread of a large body of men approaching the suburb.

'The lazy Burgundians are asleep on their post,' whispered Crawford; 'make for the suburb, Cunningham, and awaken the stupid oxen.'

'I shall creep forward, my lord,' said Quentin, 'and endeavour to bring you information.'

'Do so, my bonny lad; you have sharp ears and eyes, and goodwill; but take heed—I would not lose you.'

Then they drew within the courtyard and garden where they found the King prepared to mount his horse.

'Whither away, Sire?' said Crawford; 'you are safest here with your own people.'

'Not so,' said Louis; 'I must instantly to the Duke. He must be convinced of our faith at this critical moment, or we shall have both Liegeois and Burgundians upon us at once.' And springing on his horse, he rode off, with a small escort, to the Duke's quarters.

The delay which permitted these arrangements to be carried fully into effect was owing to Quentin's having fortunately shot the proprietor of the house, who acted as guide to the column which was designed to attack it, and whose attack, had it been made instantly, might have had a chance of being successful.

Durward, who, by the King's order, attended him to the Duke's, found the latter in a state of choleric distemperature, which almost prevented his discharging the duties of a general, which were never more necessary; for, besides the noise of a close and furious combat which had now taken place in the suburb upon the left of their whole army—besides the attack upon the King's quarters, which was fiercely maintained in the centre—a third column of Liegeois, of even superior numbers, had filed out from a more distant breach, and had fallen upon the right flank of the Burgundian army, who, alarmed at their war-cries of *Vive la France!* and *Dennis Montjoie!* which mingled with those of *Liege* and *Rouge Sanglier*, and at the idea thus inspired, of treachery on the part of the French confederates, made a very desultory and imperfect resistance; while the Duke, foaming and swearing, and cursing his liege Lord and all that belonged to him, called out to shoot with all that was French, whether black or white—alluding to the sleeves with which Louis's soldiers had designated themselves.

The arrival of the King, attended only by Le Balafré and Quentin, and half a score of Archers, restored confidence between France and Burgundy. D'Humbercourt, Crèveœur, and others of the Burgundian leaders, rushed devotedly into the conflict; and, while some commanders hastened to bring up more distant troops, to whom the panic had not extended, others threw themselves into the

tumult, reanimated the instinct of discipline, and while the Duke toiled in the front, shouting, hacking, and hewing, like an ordinary man-at-arms, brought their men by degrees into array, and dismayed their assailants by the use of their artillery. The conduct of Louis on the other hand was that of a calm, collected, sagacious leader, who neither sought nor avoided danger, but showed so much self-possession and sagacity that the Burgundian leaders readily obeyed the orders which he issued.

The scene was now become in the utmost degree animated and horrible. The battle swayed backwards and forwards with varied success, as fresh reinforcements poured out of the town, or were brought forward from the rear of the Burgundian host; and the strife continued with unremitting fury for three mortal hours, which at length brought the dawn, so much desired by the besiegers.

'Go,' said the King, to Le Balafré and Quentin, 'tell Dunois to move this way, but rather nearer the walls of Liege, with all our men-at-arms, and cut in between those thick-headed Liegeois on the right and the city, from which they are supplied with recruits.'

The uncle and nephew galloped off to Dunois and Crawford, who joyfully obeyed the summons, and, filing out at the head of a gallant body of about two hundred French gentlemen and the greater part of the Archers, marched across the field till they gained the flank of the large body of Liegeois. The increasing daylight discovered that the enemy were continuing to pour out from the city, either for the purpose of continuing the battle on that point, or of bringing safely off the forces who were already engaged.

'By Heaven!' said old Crawford to Dunois, 'were I not certain you are riding by my side, I would say I saw you among yonder banditti and burghers, marshalling and arraying them. Are you sure yonder armed leader is not your wraith?'

'My wraith!' said Dunois; 'I know not what you mean. But yonder is a caitiff with my bearings displayed on crest and shield, whom I will presently punish for his insolence.'

'In the name of all that is noble, my lord, leave the vengeance to me!' said Quentin.

"To you indeed, young man?" said Dunois; "that is a modest request. No; these things brook no substitution." Then, turning on his saddle, he called out to those around him: "Gentlemen of France, form your line, level your lances! Let the rising sunbeams shine through the battalions of yonder swine of Liege and hogs of Ardennes, that masquerade in our ancient coats."

The men-at-arms answered with a loud shout of "A Dunois! a Dunois! Orleans to the rescue!" And, with their leader in the centre, they charged at full gallop. They encountered no timid enemy. The large body which they charged consisted entirely of infantry, who, setting the butt of their lances against their feet, the front rank kneeling, the second stooping, and those behind presenting their spears over their heads, offering such resistance to the rapid charge of the men-at-arms as the hedgehog presents to his enemy. Few were able to make way through that iron wall; but of those few was Dunois, who fairly broke his way into the middle of the phalanx, and made towards the object of his animosity. What was his surprise to find Quentin still by his side, and fighting in the same front with himself—youth, desperate courage, and the determination to do or die, having still kept the youth abreast with the best knight in Europe; for such was Dunois reported, and truly reported, at the period.

Their spears were soon broken; but the *lanzknechts* were unable to withstand the blows of their long heavy swords; while the horses and riders, armed in complete steel, sustained little injury from their lances. Still Dunois and Durward were contending with rival efforts to burst forward to the spot where he who had usurped the armorial bearings of Dunois was doing the duty of a good and valiant leader, when Dunois, observing the boar's-head and tusks—the usual bearing of William de la Marck—in another part of the conflict, called out to Quentin, "You are worthy to avenge the arms of Orleans! I leave you the task. Balafré, support your nephew; but let none dare to interfere with Dunois' boar-hunt!"

That Quentin Durward joyfully acquiesced in this division of labour cannot be doubted, and each pressed forward upon his separate object.

But at this moment the column which De la Marck had proposed to support, when his own course was arrested by the charge of Dunois, had lost all the advantages they had gained during the night; while the Burgundians, with returning day, had begun to show the qualities which belonged to superior discipline. The great mass of Liegeois were compelled to retreat; and, falling back on those who were engaged with the French men-at-arms, the whole became a confused tide of fighters, fliers, and pursuers, which rolled itself towards the city-walls.

Quentin now found little difficulty in singling out De la Marck for the use he made of his terrible mace, caused many of the assailants to seek safer points of attack than that where so desperate a defender presented himself.

It was just when De la Marck had passed the door of a small chapel of peculiar sanctity, that the shouts of 'France! France! Burgundy! Burgundy!' apprised him that a part of the besiegers were entering the farther end of the street, which was a narrow one, and that his retreat was cut off. 'Comrade,' he said, 'take all the men with you. Charge yonder fellows, and break through if you can—with me it is over. I am man enough, now that I am brought to bay, to send some of these vagabond Scots to Hell before me.'

His lieutenant obeyed, and, with most of the few lanzknechts who remained alive, hurried to the farther end of the street, for the purpose of charging those Burgundians who were advancing. About six of De la Marck's best men remained to perish with their master, and fronted the Archers, who were not many more in number. 'Sanglier! Sanglier! Hola! gentlemen of Scotland,' said the ruffian but undaunted chief, waving his mace, 'who longs to gain a coronet, who strikes at the Boar of Ardennes? You, young man, have a hankering; but you must win ere you wear it.'

Quentin heard but imperfectly the words, which were partly lost in the hollow helmet; but the action could not be mistaken, and he had but time to bid his uncle and comrades, as they were gentlemen, to stand back, when De la Marck sprang upon him with a bound like a tiger, aiming at the same time a blow with his mace, but,

light of foot and quick of eye, Quentin leaped aside, and disappointed an aim which would have been fatal had it taken effect.

They then closed, like the wolf and the wolf-dog, their comrades on either side remaining inactive spectators, for Le Balafré roared out for fair play, adding, 'that he would venture his nephew on him, were he as wight as Wallace.'

Neither was the experienced soldier's confidence unjustified; for, although the blows of the despairing robber fell like those of the hammer on the anvil, yet the quick motions, the dexterous swordsmanship, of the young Archer, enabled him to escape, and to requite them with the point of his less noisy, though more fatal weapon; and that so often and so effectually, that the huge strength of his antagonist began to give way to fatigue. Yet, still unabated in courage and ire, the Wild Boar of Ardennes fought on with as much mental energy as at first, and Quentin's victory seemed dubious and distant, when a female voice behind him called him by his name, ejaculating, 'Help! help! for the sake of the blessed Virgin!'

He turned his head, and with a single glance beheld Gertrude Pavillon dragged forcibly along by a French soldier; one of several who, breaking into the chapel close by, had seized, as their prey, on the terrified females who had taken refuge there.

'Wait for me but one moment,' exclaimed Quentin to De la Marck, and sprang to extricate his benefactress from a situation of which he conjectured all the dangers.

'I wait no man's pleasure,' said De la Marck, flourishing his mace, and beginning to retreat—glad, no doubt, of being free of so formidable an assailant.

'You shall wait mine, though, by your leave,' said Balafré; 'I will not have my nephew baulked.' So saying, he instantly assaulted De la Marck with his two-handed sword.

Quentin found, in the meanwhile, that the rescue of Gertrude was a task more difficult than could be finished in one moment. Her captor, supported by his comrades, refused to relinquish his prize; and whilst Durward, aided

by one or two of his countrymen, endeavoured to compel him to do so, the former beheld the chance which Fortune had so kindly afforded him for fortune and happiness glide out of his reach; so that when he stood at length in the street with the liberated Gertrude, there was no one near them. Totally forgetting the defenceless situation of his companion, he was about to spring away in pursuit of the Boar of Ardennes, when, clinging to him in her despair, she exclaimed, 'For the sake of your mother's honour, leave me not here! As you are a gentleman, protect me to my father's house, which once sheltered you and the Lady Isabelle! For her sake leave me not!'

Her call was agonizing, but it was irresistible; and bidding a mental adieu, with unutterable bitterness of feeling, to all the gay hopes which had stimulated his exertion, and which at one moment seemed to approach consummation, Quentin protected Gertrude to Pavillon's house, and arrived in time to defend that and the Syndic himself against the fury of the licentious soldiery.

Meantime, the King and the Duke of Burgundy entered the city on horseback. They dispatched orders to stop the sack of the city, which had already commenced, and to assemble their scattered troops. The princes themselves proceeded towards the great church, both for the protection of many of the distinguished inhabitants, who had taken refuge there, and in order to hold a sort of military council after they had heard High Mass.

Busied like other officers of his rank in collecting those under his command, Lord Crawford, at the turning of one of the streets which leads to the Maes, met Le Balafré sauntering composedly towards the river, holding in his hand, by the gory locks, a human head, with as much indifference as a fowler carries a game-pouch.

'How now, Ludovic!' said his commander; 'what are you doing with that carrion?'

'It is all that is left of a bit of work which my nephew shaped out, and nearly finished, and I put the last hand to,' said Le Balafré; 'a good fellow that I dispatched yonder, and who prayed me to throw his head into the Maes.'

'And are you going to throw that head into the Maes?' said Crawford, looking more attentively on the ghastly memorial of mortality.

'Ay, truly am I,' said Ludovic Lesly. 'If you refuse a dying man his boon, you are likely to be haunted by his ghost, and I love to sleep sound at nights.'

'You must take your chance of the ghost, man,' said Crawford; 'for, by my soul, there is more lies on that dead head than you think for. Come along with me—not a word more. Come along with me.'

When High Mass had been said in the Cathedral Church of Liege, and the terrified town was restored to some moderate degree of order, Louis and Charles, with their peers around, proceeded to hear the claims of those who had any to make for services performed during the battle. Those which respected the County of Croye and its fair mistress were first received, and, to the disappointment of sundry claimants who had thought themselves sure of the rich prize, there seemed doubt and mystery to involve their several pretensions. Crèvecoeur showed a boar's hide such as De la Marck usually wore; Dunois produced a cloven shield, with his armorial bearings; and there were others, who claimed the merit of having dispatched the murderer of the Bishop, producing similar tokens—the rich reward fixed on De la Marck's head having brought death to all who were armed in his resemblance.

There was much noise and contest among the competitors, and Charles, internally regretting the rash promise which had placed the hand and wealth of his fair vassal on such a hazard, was in hopes he might find means of evading all these conflicting claims, when Crawford pressed forward into the circle, dragging Le Balafré after him, who, awkward and bashful, followed like an unwilling mastiff towed on in a leash, as his leader exclaimed: 'Away with your hoofs and hides, and painted iron! No one, save he who slew the Boar, can show the tusks!'

So saying, he flung on the floor the bloody head, easily known as that of De la Marck, by the singular confirmation of the jaws, which in reality had a certain resemblance to those of the animal whose name he bore, and which was instantly recognized by all who had seen him.

'Crawford,' said Louis, while Charles sat silent, in gloomy and displeased surprise, 'I trust it is one of my faithful Scots who has won this prize?'

'It is Ludovic Lesly, Sire, whom we call Le Balafré,' replied the old soldier.

'But is he noble?' said the Duke; 'is he of gentle blood? otherwise our promise is void.'

'He is a cross ungainly piece of wood enough,' said Crawford, looking at the tall, awkward, embarrassed figure of the Archer; 'but I warrant him a branch of the tree of Rothes for all that—and they have been as noble as any house in France or Burgundy.'

'There is then no help for it,' said the Duke, 'and the fairest and richest heiress in Burgundy must be the wife of a rude mercenary soldier like this, or die secluded in a convent—and she the only child of our faithful Reginald de Croye! I have been too rash.'

And a cloud settled on his brow, to the surprise of his peers, who seldom saw him evince the slightest token of regret for the necessary consequences of an adopted resolution.

'Hold but an instant,' said the Lord Crawford, 'it may be better than your Grace conjectures. Hear but what this cavalier has to say. Speak out, man,' he added, apart to Le Balafré.

But that blunt soldier, though he could make a shift to express himself intelligibly enough to King Louis, to whose familiarity he was habituated, yet found himself incapable of enunciating his resolution before so splendid an assembly as that in presence of which he then stood; and after having turned his shoulder to the princes, and preluded with a hoarse chuckling laugh, and two or three tremendous contortions of countenance, he was only able to pronounce the words, 'Saunders Souplejaw,' and then stuck fast.

'May it please your Majesty, and your Grace,' said Crawford, 'I must speak for my countryman and old comrade. You will understand that he has had it prophesied to him by a Seer in his own land that the fortune of his house is to be made by marriage; but as he is, like myself, something the worse for the wear, he has

acted by my advice, and resigns the pretensions acquired by the fate of slaying William de la Marck, to him by whom the Wild Boar was actually brought to bay, who is his maternal nephew.'

'I will vouch for that youth's services and prudence,' said King Louis, overjoyed to see that fate had thrown so gallant a prize to one over whom he had some influence. 'Without his prudence and vigilance, we had been ruined. It was he who made us aware of the night-sally.'

'I then,' said Charles, 'owe him some reparation for doubting his veracity.'

'And I can attest his gallantry as a man-at-arms,' said Dunois.

'But,' interrupted Crèvecoeur, 'though the uncle be a Scottish noble, that makes not the nephew necessarily so.'

'He is of the House of Durward,' said Crawford; 'descended from that Allan Durward, who was High Steward of Scotland.'

'Nay, if it be young Durward,' said Crèvecoeur, 'I say no more. Fortune has declared herself on his side too plainly, for me to struggle further with her humoursome ladyship.'

'We have yet to inquire,' said Charles thoughtfully, 'what the fair lady's sentiments may be towards this fortunate adventurer.'

'By the mass!' said Crèvecoeur, 'I have but too much reason to believe your Grace will find her more amenable to authority than on former occasions. But why should I grudge this youth his preferment? since, after all, it is sense, firmness, and gallantry which have put him in possession of WEALTH, RANK, and BEAUTY!'

NOTES.

- Page 1. *station*; position; the place where they stood.
prepossessing; handsome and attractive.
sojourner; a rather old-fashioned word which is becoming obsolete. We should say 'dweller' in ordinary speech. Scott preferred *sojourner* because it has a biblical flavour and a rotundity. It is a pity that through the vagaries of linguistic fashion such fine old words go out of use.
the Bohemian; used in the Middle Ages to describe the gipsies, whose original home is unknown.
he is a lost man; i.e. he will be drowned.
the water is up; the river is in flood.
gossip; used in the Middle Ages in addressing an intimate companion. We might say 'my good friend'.
the water be deep. Scott uses the subjunctive mood, which is rapidly disappearing from English.
- p. 2. *buskins*; rather shapeless half-boots worn in the Middle Ages.
By *Saint Anne*; religion was a very real thing to people in mediaeval times, and part and parcel of their lives. Thus religious expressions were used freely in conversation.
a proper youth; a well set-up, handsome young fellow.
Samaritan; one who is ready to help his fellow-creatures. The story of the Good Samaritan is one of Jesus Christ's parables; and may be read in St. Luke, Chapter 10.
ireful; another rather obsolete word, found only in poetry as a rule. The use of such words gives dignity to Scott's style, and at the same time

makes the reader feel that he is reading about a past age.

a significant flourish. He brandished his stick in a threatening manner.

p. 3. *precipitation*; undue haste.

your dialect; he spoke French imperfectly and with a foreign accent.

substantial; well-to-do.

rarely; exactly.

cadet; a younger son of good family.

custom of my countrymen; Scotland being a poor country, many of her sons sought service abroad, the majority as mercenary soldiers.

p. 4. *springald*; another obsolete word, denoting an active, energetic, and self-confident youth.

traffic; business.

braeman; a hill man, or highlander. Most Scottish Highlanders knew little more than the art of fighting in those days.

a convent; because, before the Reformation, there were very few schools other than convent schools.

cipher; to do arithmetic.

Rest you merry; i.e. 'you are pleased to joke, but don't carry it too far.'

fier comme un Ecossais; proud as a Scotsman.

sack; a wine of the period.

hawking; the mediæval sport of hunting with hawks or falcons.

chase; park or estate.

forester; game-keeper.

bringing me into some note; giving me a reputation.

Peronne; in the north of France, near the borders of Flanders.

p. 5. *as prompt as the King of France*; an example of Irony, as Quentin did not know that he was speaking to the King of France.

have a heavy miss; lose a good chance.

paladin; excellent soldier. It means really a knight of high renown.

the truce; between France and Burgundy.

- bonnet*; because the traditional headgear of the Scottish Highlander is the Glengarry bonnet.
borne in hand; treated.
which the youth observing, dealt him; an example of logical, rather than grammatical expression, of which many instances are to be found in the style of Scott, who wrote 'like a gentleman'.
- p. 6. *fantasy*; the older form of 'fancy'.
ducats; a well-known coin of the continent of Europe, as readers of the MERCHANT OF VENICE will remember.
at a round pace; directly and with haste.
a special eye to; guards particularly.
- p. 7. *favour*; countenance. The whole sentence is an example of Irony, as the person referred to is the State hangman.
by no means; on no account.
heathy hills; the Scottish highlands are covered with heather.
calthrops; sharp pronged stakes, designed to injure foot-passengers and especially horses.
Chateau; the French word for castle.
gins; iron traps to injure trespassers.
- p. 8. *cabinet*; private room or study.
Archers of the Royal Guard; who were recruited entirely from Scotland.
- p. 9. *his eye glanced*; his eyes were bright with excitement and interest.
of days . . . of nights; in the day-time . . . in the night-time.
- p. 10. *he will brook cold iron*; i.e. I shall attack him with my sword for insulting me.
family names; Christian names which are borne by members of the family generation after generation.
to-name; a distinguishing name, or nickname.
nom de guerre; name assumed in warfare, thus nickname or alias.
Balafré; the scarred one: from the French word.
proper; well set-up, sturdy and strong.

- p. 11. *emulous*; desirous.
flight-shot; the distance of an arrow's flight.
doddered; weakening with age.
corbies; the colloquial Scottish word for crows.
- p. 12 *Maitre Pierre*; Master Peter. The King chooses Pierre, which is a very common name in France, to maintain his disguise. It is very remarkable how often Scott (and also Shakespeare) have their principal characters in some sort of disguise. The student should find out the reasons for this device.
on my own good; on what I possess. He is comfortably off.
causeway; a road paved with stones.
flayers; robbers, highwaymen.
reckoning; bill.
- p. 13. *complaisant*; polite. The idea is that he honours the other by accepting his hospitality.
fleur-de-lys; the lily flower, the national emblem of France.
prating humour; talkative mood.
- p. 14. *regales*; from the French word *regal*, meaning a feast or entertainment.
Gauls; the ancient name of the inhabitants of France.
ragout; a stew.
mighty pasty; large meat pie.
vin de Beaune; wine of the Beaune district.
comfiture; or *confiture*, meaning preserve or jam. Here it means 'sweets' generally.
- p. 15. *Glen*; a word meaning valley.
midges; mosquitoes.
on the file; on the roll.
ally of Scotland; France and Scotland were ancient allies, due to their mutual hatred of England. England's traditional ally was Flanders.
Douglas; one of the most celebrated of the noble Scottish families.
Montl'hery; a battle fought in France in the year 1465 between Louis XI and his nobles.

- p. 16. *Brussels*; the capital city of modern Belgium. The *Burgundy* referred to in the story comprised roughly the same territory.
Ardennes; a hilly district in Belgium.
Luxembourg; lying between France and Germany.
- p. 17. *St. Quenlin*; the name of a town in the north of France.
St. Julian; the patron saint of travellers.
chased; ornamented.
the metropolis; Paris, the capital of France.
minutiae; details.
- p. 18. *mountain chivalry*; the lofty courtesy of the Scottish Highlanders.
giddy; inconstant.
throw down his gage; throw down his glove, i.e. challenge to fight.
- p. 19. *bandy words*; argue.
- p. 20. *mechanical*; i.e. belonging to trade.
gillie; a highland servant or retainer.
- p. 22. *Cathay*; the name for China in the Middle Ages.
Venetians; who were the traders of the civilized world in mediæval times, before the discovery of America.
- p. 23. *abroad*; with its older meaning of 'out of doors'.
vernat; a French wine.
- p. 25. *brethren of the joyous science*; comrades at arms and other mercenaries.
St. Andrew; the patron saint of Scotland.
festival of St. Jude; October 28th.
Roche-noir; i.e. black rock.
Bras-de-fer; iron arm.
free lances; mercenary soldiers.
- p. 26. *coutelier*; a subordinate soldier, armed with a *knife* instead of a sword. French *couteau*, a knife.
St. Bartholomew; who was flayed alive.
- p. 27. *to colour it*; to make it seem more likely.
- p. 28. *the Most Christian King*; one of the titles of the Kings of France.

- p. 29. *feudatories*; nobles who hold their estates direct from the King.
Provost-Marshal; the officer whose duty it is to see that the Royal punishments and sentences are carried out.
- p. 31. *trafficker*; travelling merchant, or pedlar.
the golden rule; to do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.
- p. 33. *Syndic*; one of the high officers of the town.
beadle; church-officer or sacristan.
- p. 34. *fool's cap*; the Scottish bonnet was of a fashion strange to them, and what is uncommon is, to the common mind, foolish.
shun; avoid.
- p. 35. *accession*; help, assistance.
- p. 38. *signior*; an Italian, rather than French form of address, which is 'monsieur'.
comfortable man; a man who gives comfort to others. This differs from the modern use of the word.
ghostly advice; spiritual advice.
- p. 39. *finishers of the law*; the executioners.
- p. 43. *harquebusses*; a very early type of hand-gun or musket.
- p. 44. *ruffle*; disturbance. This is a noun, coined by Scott from the verb to 'ruffle'.
loon; properly a 'fool', but here more likely a 'rascal'.
bairn; a Scottish word for 'child'.
skailh; another Northern word for 'harm' or 'injury'.
- p. 45. *exercise*; military drill.
spears breaking; fighting, warfare.
a bird whistled; i.e. I received a secret hint.
browst; brew.
- p. 46. *Caledonia*; the ancient name for Scotland.

- p. 49. *Dauphin*; the title of the heir to the French throne.
vespers; evening prayers.
rouse; drinking of a health.
- p. 50. *caserne*; barracks.
primes; the first morning prayers.
- p. 51. *nervous*; with the less common meaning of
 'sinewy'.
- p. 52. *countenance*; friendship and kindness, on the part
 of the King.
Wolsey; whose tragic fate forms one of the most
 dramatic scenes in Shakespeare's play of KING
 HENRY EIGHTH.
- p. 53. *tonsor*; barber.
- p. 54. *Sieur*; a variant of 'monsieur' and equivalent to
 'signior'.
he recognized; cf. the similar scene in THE LADY
 OF THE LAKE, when the heroine sees that the
 Knight of Snowdoun is King James V.
- p. 55. *year, day, hour*; in order to fashion his horoscope
 King Louis had some belief in astrology.
- p. 56. *vestal*; because the Princess wished to become a
 nun, with the vows of chastity accompanying
 that state.
St. Hubert; the patron saint of sport.
- p. 57. *Arabesque*; fanciful and floral ornamentation.
- p. 58. *Flemings*; the name given to the inhabitants of
 Flanders.
- p. 59. *fortified in her contumacy*; strengthened and en-
 couraged in her resistance.
beadroll; list.
- p. 60. *puissant*; powerful.
- p. 61. *Vive Bourgogne*; long live Burgundy.
lieges; subjects.
- p. 63. *punctilio*; point or detail.
damosel; the older form of damsels.
- p. 64. *mauvais*; wicked.
Diable; devil.

- p. 66. *cabaretier*; the keeper of an inn.
- p. 67. *vigil*; combining the ideas of watching and fasting.
beauflét; sideboard. The word 'buffet', commonly used in English for a refreshment room, is the same.
the churchman; i.e. Cardinal Baluze.
Ecosse, en avant; Forward, Scotland!
- p. 68. *piece*; musket.
- p. 69. *smooth*; with no very severe rules of conduct.
- p. 71. *nymph of the lute*; in a scene at the hostelry which has been omitted, Quentin overheard the young lady playing upon the lute and singing to its accompaniment the song 'County Guy'.
- p. 73. *Charlemagne*; King and Emperor at the end of the 8th century.
- p. 77. *Bailley*; fortified place within a castle.
- p. 78. *the Empire*; the Holy Roman Empire.
- p. 79. *three thousand archers*; the English archers were very famous in the continental wars of the Middle Ages.
- p. 80. *determine*; convince the ladies that flight is necessary.
Bretagne; Brittany.
Calais; at that time in the possession of England.
- p. 82. *spring-tide*; full tide.
scroll; parchment paper.
Maitre d'Hotel; officer in charge.
pilgrimage; pilgrimages constituted a very important part of life in the Middle Ages, when religion was a very real factor. Cf. Chaucer's CANTERBURY TALES.
- the Eastern Monarchs*; the Three Magi, or Wise Men of the East, who visited the infant Christ at Bethlehem.
- ' In the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, " Where is he that is born King of the Jews;

for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him”.

These three kings were Melchior, king of Nubia, Balthazar, king of Chaldea, and Jasper, king of Tarhish. They were buried in Constantinople; but in 1164 the relics were removed to Cologne, and they are therefore known as ‘The Three Kings of Cologne’. The faithful made pilgrimages to this sacred shrine.

- p. 83. *rendezvous*; appointed place of meeting.
sumpter; baggage.
Gascon; Gascony is a district in France.
interested; i.e. prompted by self-interest.
- p. 84. *degree*; social standing, rank.
- p. 86. *the cord*; the hangman’s rope.
demi-volte; i.e. caused his horse to rear and make a half turn at the same time.
Provostry; subordinates of the Provost-Marshall, who maintained law and order.
- p. 87. *devoir*; duty.
career; charge on horseback of the two knights against each other.
- p. 90. *canaille*; the inferior soldiers in the band.
planet-struck. A belief in astrology was general in the Middle Ages.
full fain; very willingly.
- p. 92. *morion*; helmet.
give him a bonnet. Thus naturally does Scott introduce a small incident which has important consequences for the plot.
handwriting; i.e. dints made by the sword-strokes of Quentin.
- p. 94. *gloire*; glory. This refers to a scene which has been omitted, in which Quentin comes to the King’s rescue in a boar-hunt.
- p. 95. *our tents*; because the gipsies lived a wandering life.
- p. 96. *correspondence*; alliance.

- p. 97. *ubiquity*; being everywhere at once.
naivete; ingenuousness, simplicity.
Major Domo; officer in charge.
occult arts; telling fortunes by the stars or from the hand, conjuring, deception and trickery of every sort.
Franciscan; an order of friars founded by St. Francis of Assisi.
lay brother; one who had not taken all the vows of the order.
refection; meal.
- p. 98. *treadeth down*; quoting from the Scriptures.
bait; attack and kill.
Peronne; a town on the borders of France and Burgundy.
his captains. This is biblical language, with which the speech of the Prior is flavoured throughout.
- p. 99. *this weary wilderness*; the world. This is the philosophy and outlook of the Middle Ages.
forsend; forbid.
Sacristan; official who has particular charge of the chapel or church.
- p. 100. *the Superior*; i.e. the Prior.
a convent; used generally for any religious institution.
- p. 101. *career*; journey.
sylvan habits; training in hunting and forestry.
weeping willow; the branches of which bend down and touch the water.
approximation; guess at the meaning.
bastinading; beating he had received at the hands of the friars.
Donner and blitz; thunder and lightning!
- p. 102. *Meinherr*; the German and Flemish equivalent of Monsieur or Seignior.
lanznecht; lancer: soldier armed with a lance in addition to his other weapons.
wild-cat; the wild-cat was fairly common in the Scottish Highlands down to modern times.

- spark*; bright and active young soldier.
make in on; surround and capture.
- p. 103. *leaguer*; encampment.
communed; pondered, thought earnestly.
left hand of the Maes; the left bank of the Meuse
 or Maes, a river flowing north-westward through
 Flanders.
- p. 104. *recommended himself*; in prayer to God.
- p. 107. *Venus*; the Goddess of Love.
chiromantist; one who tells fortunes by examining
 the hand.
Zingaro; one of the words used by the gipsies
 themselves to describe their people.
- p. 109. *Moor*; the Moors, who invaded southern Europe
 from north Africa in the early Middle Ages,
 were supposed to be of the same race as the
 gipsies.
- p. 110. *romaunt*; a long mediæval poem of love and ad-
 venture.
- p. 112. *Marthon*; the female attendant of the two ladies.
- p. 113. *your oath*; Quentin had sworn by St. Andrew,
 the patron of Scotland. Therefore he was
 clearly one of King Louis's archers.
- p. 115. *Stadhouse*; municipal headquarters.
to do the honouis; secure the privilege of enter-
 taining.
vivat; long may he live!
Trudchen; a pet name for Gertrude.
- p. 116. *guilder*; a Dutch coin worth about a rupee.
- p. 117. *parterres*; flower-beds.
billet; brief letter. Its contents recall the letter
 found in the garden by Malvolio in Shakespeare's
 TWELFTH NIGHT.
- p. 118. *lozenge*; in shape like a diamond.
- p. 123. *treble pipe*; shrill voice.
- p. 124. *fosse*; ditch or moat.
- p. 125. *sanglier*; the wild boar.

- p. 126. *wainscot*; wood-work lining the walls of a room.
arras; hanging curtains round the walls.
oratory; recess furnished with a small altar or
 crucifix, used for private prayers.
holy image; the figure of Christ on the Cross.
- p. 127. *skimmers' guild of curriers*; the association of those
 workmen employed in the preparation and curing
 of skins.
- p. 128. *Burgomaster*; head of the municipality.
- p. 129. *bachelor*; here it means the lady's affianced lover,
 her betrothed.
groat; a coin worth about four annas.
jerkin; short, close-fitting jacket, suitable for
 working-men.
what should my daughter make here; why should
 my daughter be present in this place.
- p. 130. *dangers of the course*; i.e. the attacks of the dogs
 in the cruel mediæval sport of bear-baiting.
- p. 131. *Mars*; the God of war of the Romans.
- p. 132. *compromised*; endangered.
- p. 133. *Nikkel*; the Flemish form of Nicol or Nicholas.
rightless; with no rights of citizenship.
palmer; pilgrim.
- p. 134. *Ratisbon*; in Germany.
shambles; slaughter-house.
accommodation; agreement, terms of truce.
brood; followers.
- p. 135. *carouse*; drinking of healths.
- p. 138. *a Bohemian*; the gipsy guide, who led the Countess
 Hameline back to the castle and to the Boar
 of Ardennes.
- p. 139. *boor*; merely 'countryman'.
Mother Mabel; the mother of Trudchen, and wife
 of the Syndic.
- p. 140. *Brabant*; a district of Flanders.
- p. 142. *Schwarz-reiters*; i.e. black riders, followers of
 the Boar of Ardennes.

- p. 143. *coif*; headdress of a girl.
- p. 145. *damosels errant*; wandering maidens.
- p. 146. *abatement*; lessening.
paladins; wandering champions of romantic tales.
- p. 148. *Charleroi*; a town in Flanders.
Cistercian; an order of monks and nuns.
- p. 149. *Landrecy*; a French town on the Belgian border.
- p. 150. *Hainault*; a district in Flanders.
venerable; venerated, revered, honoured.
are public news. The word *news* is treated as singular in modern usage.
Edward of England; King Edward IV.
- Poictiers*; one of the decisive English victories in the Hundred Years' War. It was fought in 1356.
- p. 151. *Toison d'Or*; the Burgundian herald.
Galeotti. Scott was attracted by all the mysterious persons of the Middle Ages, such as astrologers, gipsies, etc., and they are often introduced into his novels.
- p. 152. *linstock*; the stick which carried the match used for setting off mediæval cannon.
la Pucelle; the Virgin.
Somme; a river in the north of France.
- p. 153. *Le Glorieux*; i.e. the boaster.
- p. 154. *Tiel*; the jester's Christian name.
- p. 155. *Messires*; i.e. Messieurs, or gentlemen.
in the marshes; where they had gone hunting.
- p. 158. *discountenance*; lack of friendliness.
natural places; subordinate positions.
generous; inspired by nobler and more chivalrous thoughts.
- p. 160. *melee*; general fight, without order or disciplined command.
- p. 161. *philosopher*; astrologer.
- p. 162. *the Florentine*; Dante, the famous mediæval poet of Italy, who belonged to the city of Florence.

- Walloon*; the district of Belgium lying between Brussels and the German frontier.
- to mate you*; to equal you.
- an if*; i.e. if. *An* is an old word meaning 'if'.
- p. 163. *good corporal bail*; a good material reason.
Seneschal; the officer in charge of the Castle.
Gothic Keep; a separate and self-contained tower or small castle within the larger building, built in the Gothic style of architecture. The Goths flourished in the earlier years of the Christian era, and established empires in Rome, Spain, and on the Danube.
donjon; castle or keep.
Charles the Simple; who reigned in France from 898 to 923.
- p. 164. *waste hall*; empty and deserted main chamber.
pallets; beds of straw.
wicket; small door.
cabinet; small sitting-room or study.
- p. 165. *Mornay*; the name of the old Seneschal.
motley; dress of mixed colours, worn particularly by court-jesters.
purple; the royal colour.
- p. 166. *paroxysms*; violent burst of passion.
thickly; indistinctly.
- p. 167. *sacred character attached to the person of a King*; referring to the mediæval theory of the 'Divine Right' of kings.
- p. 168. *Saint Denis*; a patron saint of Paris.
kindling; becoming more impassioned.
depend on the cast of the dice; are entirely a matter of chance.
filed; smooth and polite.
- p. 169. *pilot himself*. The English language is full of figurative expressions from the sea and seafaring life.
halberds and partisans; mediæval weapons.
ante-chamber; the waiting-room in which the

King's visitors sat awaiting the summons to enter his study.

- p. 170. *his Most Christian Majesty*; one of the titles of the King of France. Cf. 'Defender of the Faith'.
- feudal good faith*; the allegiance due to one's superior which was the central fact in the feudal system.
- a fair accommodation*; a satisfactory agreement.
- p. 171. *to close his ducal coronet with*; to enclose it within, or surmount it with. In addition to his powers as Duke of Burgundy Charles aimed at freedom as unrestricted as an emperor's: the globe signifying earthly independence.
- p. 172. *He that fires* etc.; the meaning has been enshrined by Shakespeare in a proverbial expression: 'the engineer hoist with his own petard'.
- consist with*; be in keeping with.
- p. 174. *there are strange news*; modern usage requires *news* to be treated as a singular noun.
- p. 175. *this is like*; this is likely.
hors de page; out of my apprenticeship as a page.
- p. 176. *shape his course*; another example of figurative language borrowed from sea-faring life.
mine enemies. Another example of the rather archaic language found in Scott.
he fed me, etc.; reminiscent of the language of the Bible.
- p. 177. *on the rocks*; again the language of the sea, natural enough in an island nation.
- p. 178. *coxcomb*; fellow.
- p. 181. *malapert*; forward and impudent.
neither; an example of the double negative, not now permitted in standard English, but giving the necessary archaic flavour to the story.
- p. 182. *do not take that*, etc.; do not swear to that upon your chances of salvation.

- came tenderly off*; was given and taken very naturally and affectionately.
- p. 185. *the event*; the result.
- p. 186. *set by the ears*; cause them to fight each other, set them quarrelling.
- p. 187. *shall be exalted*; again the language of the Bible, which is closely woven into the texture of English.
- p. 188. *double*; evade the truth; prevaricate; twist a statement instead of being straightforward.
- p. 191. *Rouge Sanglier*; i.e. red boar.
Chapiter; ecclesiastical council.
- p. 192. *Imperial Diet*; the Assembly or Parliament of the Holy Roman Empire.
- p. 193. *largesse*; liberal gifts of money given to heralds.
- p. 194. *potence*; with the meaning of erect and ready.
- p. 200. *Saunders Souplejaw*; the prophet and soothsayer of the Lesleys. The name means 'Alexander with the ready tongue'.
- p. 201. *the palm*; the prize.
- p. 202. *the letter of her aunt*; given to Quentin by the Bohemian, Maugrabin, just before his execution.
- p. 205. *scarfs*; more usually 'scarves', although both forms are correct.
I will go arm me; rather archaic language, for 'I shall go and arm myself'.
- p. 206. *rounding it in*; shaping it for.
- p. 207. *Bar Sinister*; diagonal line across the device to signify illegitimate birth.
- p. 209. *caitiff*; archaic word for 'rascal'.
- p. 212. *wight as Wallace*; as powerful and skilful a fighter as Sir William Wallace, a Scottish patriot who led his countrymen against the English in the latter end of the 13th century.
- p. 215. *branch of the tree*; i.e. the family tree.

QUESTIONS.

1. Describe *one* of the following places:—
 - (a) The Royal Castle at Plessis.
 - (b) Any mediæval monastery.
 - (c) The Bishop's castle at Schonwald.
 - (d) The city of Liege and its inhabitants.
2. Narrate *one* of the following incidents:—
 - (i) Quentin's first meeting with the King.
 - (ii) Quentin's narrow escape from being hanged.
 - (iii) Quentin meets the Countess at the inn.
 - (iv) The fight between Quentin and the Duke of Orleans.
 - (v) Quentin climbs a willow-tree.
 - (vi) The scene within Schonwald.
 - (vii) Quentin's fight with William de la Marck, and its sequel.
3. What have the following pairs of characters in common, and in what do they differ?—
 - (a) The Countess Hameline and the Countess Isabelle.
 - (b) The Count of Crevecoeur and Lord Crawford.
 - (c) Oliver Dain and Philip des Comines.
 - (d) Quentin and Le Balafré.
 - (e) The gipsy guide and the Court jester.
 - (f) Louis XI and Charles the Bold.
4. What do you learn about?—
 - (i) Travelling in the Middle Ages.
 - (ii) The lawlessness of the Middle Ages.
 - (iii) The common people in the Middle Ages.
 - (iv) The importance of Religion in mediæval life.
5. Why was Scotland 'the ancient ally of France'?
6. Can you explain why Scott
(a) loved the Middle Ages;

QUESTIONS

- (b) did not love the mob;
 - (c) loved 'to vivify the popular heroes of tradition and legend';
 - (d) like many modern novelists, placed his heroes in Foreign Legions?
7. Which are the most romantic incidents in *QUENTIN DURWARD*?
8. Give some instances of Scott's
- (a) humour;
 - (b) love of natural beauty;
 - (c) love of the out-door life;
 - (d) insight into human nature;
 - (e) wide human sympathies;
 - (f) strong feelings about loyalty and patriotism;
 - (g) love of the colour in life.
9. What evidence is there in *QUENTIN DURWARD* of Scott's careful preparation of his subject?
10. Scott 'wrote like a gentleman'. Examine his style.
11. 'Scott's subordinate characters are more attractive than his heroes and heroines.' Do you agree?
12. 'One benefits from reading Scott as one benefits from a holiday by the sea-shore or in the mountains.' Discuss.

